

Interview with Debbie FINAL

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Welcome to Just breathe. The podcast focused on transforming the LGBTQ plus conversation and supporting you on your journey with your LGBTQ loved one. You are not alone.



Welcome to Just breathe parenting your LGBTQ teen. My name is Heather Hester and I am excited to be with you to transform the conversation around loving and raising an LGBTQ child. Wherever you are on this journey right now, in this moment in time, you are not alone. I am so excited to introduce today's guest, Debbie Reaper. Debbie is a New York Times best selling author There have multiple books including differently wired, which we are talking about today. She is the creator of the tilt, parenting community and podcast, as well as an internationally known speaker. And my book coach, Debbie is as admirable as she is down to earth and likeable. And I feel so lucky that I've had the honor to work with her and call her friend. So without further ado, here is Debbie Reaper. Enjoy the interview. Debbie, thanks so much for being with me today and for sharing. Just everything you're going to share with us and taking the time out of your very, very busy schedule and fund schedule to let us take a peek into what you what you've been doing and what you're up to well get



started right away with



Just a few questions for you. And I'm sure lots of fun conversation. You shifted from writing inspirational fiction and nonfiction for young girls to writing a more personal nonfiction book called differently wired. Can you share with us why you made that shift?



Sure. So I started writing and volunteering and working with teen girls. In 2003, I used to work in Kids TV, and when I left that I just knew teen girls. That was my sweet spot that I felt like I was a recovering teen girl. And I just felt this strong pull to support girls in just developing more confidence and self esteem and self worth and really creating the lives that they want for themselves and spare them a lot of the heartache and the pain that I had experience. And was really just coming out of in my mid 20s, or I guess, late 20s. So I did that work for many years, I used to volunteer with girls, organizations, I speak at girls conferences, that was really just my passion. And so when I had a child, when I got pregnant, I was pretty sure I was going to have a girl. And I didn't. I was shocked. But as it turned out, I had fun. And as you know, he developed and we got to know who he was and he started to grow up then we also discovered he's, he's not your typical kid, he's actually got a lot going on. And some different means that that were more than your typical parent might be expected to be facing with their child. And so this gradual in some ways, it was a gradual shift. Where I kind of started to realize, okay, I'm working in this space. And then all my other time is spent trying to figure out how to support who this human is. And I felt very disconnected, I started to feel more disconnected from the work with girls. And so it was, it was the summer of 2013. I had just signed a contract to write a book for teen girls, a nonfiction book.



And I,



I just had this epiphany. That summer, I said, You know what, this is my last book for teenagers. I'm kind of done. I've said what I need to say. And my focus and energy is totally in this other place. And actually, this is where I feel I'm meant to pivot. And so I made that decision to to I finish that book, I turned it in and within a year of turning it in, I started developing what has ultimately become tilde parenting. What became Another book what is you know, became my podcast, I just just completely changed direction.



That is really that's amazing, really amazing, but it makes total sense. I think it's also really cool that you were able that you were so aware of where you needed to be where you want to be, instead of continuing on with something that you felt like, well, I should be doing this. I'm good at this. Right following your intuition, your gut feeling you're like this is this is my son. And there's a lot to learn here and a lot to figure out here.



I will say though,



it wasn't I didn't do it without resistance. Like I definitely went through a phase probably a few years, where I was kind of resentful, right about the fact that I I've spent years and years developing a name for myself. in this community and becoming an authority on teenagers and you know, have worked so hard. And so there was a part of me that felt resentful that I wasn't able to spend all my time doing that work because I was being pulled in this other direction. And I didn't really want to go in that direction right away. So there was a lot of back and forth. And over time, and with a lot of reflection and journaling, and just doing that kind of deep inner work. I did ultimately realize, Oh, yeah, this is what I'm supposed to be doing right now. And I stopped fighting it. Wow.



Yeah, that's, I mean, I think that's really important. I'm glad you added that because I think that when when we do have to pivot when we do pivot or choose to pivot, it doesn't come without discomfort. And especially if we do love what we were doing before in our connection, To edit, it's easy. It's become second nature and, you know, this this new thing that we're being pulled toward. We don't know as much about right. And it's sometimes not necessarily even what you want to know about, but



all of this information about how my child's brain works, I don't know.



Yeah, exactly, exactly. Oh, my goodness. So before I go, because I know that we're going to kind of get into more of the nitty gritty of this, and I would love just so my audience really kind of understands who Asher is and what some of his, you know, as he's been developing and growing. What are some of the things that you you know, you've learned and he's had to, you know, he's struggled with?



Yeah, so he, you know, as a little guy was just a very intense, you know, colicky Baby and, and just a lot I always say he was just more I use that word a lot. He was more verbose. He was more precocious, he was more fidgety, he was more just more. Right. Right. And so early on it was just really intensity, this really intense personality and very rigid and inflexible, coupled with this incredible intellect taught himself to read before he turned three and could have really interesting conversations with people at a very young age. And so for like, this woman is really fascinating. And really didn't fit into your typical preschool class or your typical because it's because he had his own plans, right. He was very much wasted and doing things his own way. And so, you know, wisdom over a number of years of Different classroom environments and doing different assessments and kind of going from maybe we just need some occupational therapy or work around anger management to Oh, okay. Discovering he has. He's profoundly gifted, which is in its own right, that special need. Right. He has ADHD. He has sensory issues. He's so he's a very complicated human, as we've learned over the years, it's what he he's described as being twice exceptional, which is that pairing of having intellectually gifted but also having some other sort of learning or attention challenges. So that combination can be really tricky.



Wow. Yes, absolutely. Holy cow. I think that that flows really well into my next question, because I think that'll help help everyone understand even more because you've done your homework and and Your research and I heard you talk at a conference a few months ago, which was very exciting for me. It was the Zen parenting conference. And at the time, during your talk, you use the term neurodivergent. When you use that term, it was such a light bulb moment for me because I had really been thinking much more narrowly about I didn't completely understand your work and and everything surrounding it. And so I'd love if you could talk a little bit about your, you know, the research that went into really discovering what neuro divergence is, and as well as how that applies to the kids of you

know, many of the kids of the parents who are in my audience.



Yeah, so when I first made this pivot, I kind of knew that I wanted to create a community and resources for other parents who were raising kids. That, you know, didn't fit in to the box kids that for whatever reason, we're wired in such a way that traditional schools or traditional societal expectations or milestones or or whatever, we're not meshing with the way that these kids move through the world. And so I started looking at all the different ways that people can be wired. And of course, there's so many right there, right, you know, I mentioned ADHD, I mentioned giftedness, autism spectrum disorder, anxiety, sensory processing issues, speed processing issues, highly sensitive people, you know, there are so many different ways right? to look through the world. And so I started thinking about this term of being differently wired. And as I was doing the research to create tilt and thinking about this language of differently wired. I did a lot of research with the mirror. Diversity movement, and that is a movement that was really founded by the autism community. And so it originated with autism. And it was the idea that there is no one way right that a brain can be wired and that someone who's autistic, it is a normal variation of the brain. It's just, but it's a variation. It's nothing. So it was kind of in response to this idea of someone being neurotypical, which is, quote, unquote, normal. You know, it's kind of what's expected. So, right, it was in response to that. And so, the autistic community really owns that word. I think, in many ways neuro diversity, and I've started I used it, I use it sometimes, but I like the word neuro divergence, because I think it really talks about in the way that I use it is that it is about this idea that our brains are unique. And there are so many ways like we know they say this in the autistic community you you you know one autistic person, you know one autistic person like they no two people are alike. But the same is true for everyone. And right. If we can embrace this idea that any way of being quote unquote a typical is a normal, not an aberration. It's a normal variation of the way that our brains are wired that feels to me inclusive, it feels positive, it feels optimistic, and it doesn't focus on deficits or things being bad. It focuses on this idea of Wow, aren't we all interesting? There are so many ways to experience life and the world. That's awesome. And I think that I love that because it allows us to really look



at everyone in a different way. Right and in a good way. in a positive way, and instead of with fear, or oh my gosh, I don't understand this with curiosity and kind of wonder of, Wow, that's pretty amazing. And I think that, you know, for so long, we just, there's the, you know, I hate to use the word normal, but normal, right, this is normal. And, you know,

when, when any of our kids feel like they're not normal, that's a bad thing. And this I think will help help us as parents use different language so that our kids are like, I don't want to be normal, right? Being that normal is good. You know and and really, learning to embrace both the parent and the child embrace their, their what makes them really unique and celebrate the fact that they, they are differently wired. So Thank you for that. And thank you for doing all of that research and really starting and continuing, you know, movements that have been done in different ways. But I think this is a very unique way of looking at it. And it's something that many parents can kind of look at me like, Oh, yeah, this isn't just applicable to one thing it could. It's really inclusive. So thank you.



Yeah, of course. And if I can just share one thing with you, horse, it's on my mind. I've just discovered this author named Todd rose. He's a researcher from Harvard, and he wrote this book called The end of average. And it's so interesting, the research that he's done just to show that average does not exist. We know this, we know that. You know, systems or products or whatever it is that are created for the average actually don't, they're not created. For anyone, because there is no average person. And so I think that ties in also with this, this idea that there's no normal, like normal does not exist. And the sooner we recognize that and let go of this idea that there is one right way to be and everything else is wrong, the sooner we'll accept all the different ways of being human.



Right. Absolutely. Right. I think that is so spot on. And, and sometimes, you know, as I've thought about this, too, is, you know, those who want to be quote, unquote, normal. Really, what they want to do is kind of fly under the radar. They don't necessarily want to be seen, right. There's this and I think, especially when you're dealing with, you know, pre adolescence adult, you know, teenagers, young adults, like, there's so much other stuff going on that really what they want is just to be like to survive through it and to figure their own stuff out. Right. So I think that no Normal gets thrown around a lot, especially in those during those really just, there's so many changes going on during those years. So the more that we can celebrate, not being normal, normal, and embracing the uniqueness, the better. So thank you and I love that I will grab that book. And, and read it because I love that. That's awesome. So this is actually kind of perfect, because that kind of leads us into your book, which I love as I was reading it reading at the end of it. I'd started it a year ago, and then I didn't finish and so I was very excited to kind of really look at I think, you know, it was like timing with everything right? Like, sometimes you start things and it's just not the right time for you to be rating them or to get out of them what you need to get out of

them. I felt like that was definitely true with your book. reading through so differently wired just so everybody out there knows, consists of 18 tips or mental shifts, which Debbie has called tilts. And that's where her theme of her parenting community comes from her podcast, her website, everything, which is a really great way, you know, it's another way to say shift, right? And I love that, you know, each one I'm reading and I'm like, Oh my gosh, I really pull something from each one. So I was really having a hard time because I was like, I want to



talk about a couple of



things. And I can't talk about all 18 today. So the ones that I pulled from are the ones that I've really wanted to have you talk about are tilt three, which is let go of what others think. Tilt five parent from a place of possibility instead of fear and tilt 17 Help your kids embrace self discovery. So I can I can go back over that again cuz I know I just throw a lot at you.



No I can. I can go through those.



Okay, awesome. Yeah. So have been one of these have been most helpful and what do you want parents to really pick up from these to learn from these?



Yeah and I will just say to that when people ask me what are the most important tools I always say all of them like they're



really all there I wrote them because they all have profoundly changed my life.



Yeah, so it's it is sometimes hard to narrow down but I love the ones that you honed in on so till three which is let go of what others think. I think this is such a powerful tilt because a lot of what I write about is how the source of pain that we as parents are experiencing in relation to our child stems from our thinking it stems from What we're making our circumstances mean. And this idea of being judged or perceived in a way that we don't like by other people is a huge button for so many of us. It was for me, it's a little bit but I've been working on this one for a long time. But when you have a child who, who isn't acting or being showing up in the way that is considered appropriate, normal, okay, fine. Often the attention is turned to the parents, and there could be judgment, shame. we as parents can feel embarrassment, humiliation, like failures, you know, we can just internalize all of this. And so, doing this work of letting go of what other people think can be so important and can really change things because once We start noticing that our response to something, if we're doing it to benefit another person who's not part of our world, and we can't control what they think or feel or do anyway, then we can really focus on our core relationship we can focus on really supporting our child in the way that they need without all that other stuff, getting in the way and triggering our insecurities and all of those things. You know, I write about this in the book, but I definitely in a public situation, if, you know, my son did something that was perceived by others to be completely unacceptable for the circumstance or the environment. I would feel those eyes on me and I would sometimes make a really bad parenting decisions because I was trying to say face, right,



right, right. So



it is really important that we kind of recognize where we stand on this like how can cerned are weak with what other people think. And why is that and just start paying attention to that so that we can do actively do the work of letting go of that. And part of that is checking ourselves on the way that we judge others, because we all do it.



Right. Right.



We all show we all observe, you know, I'm sitting, as we're talking, I'm in doing this from my apartment in Brooklyn, and I see someone walk by with their child not wearing a mask. We're recording this in the COVID-19 days, I'm judging. Right, right. It's human nature. And so we need to notice when we're doing that, so we can check ourselves and then recognize, oh, this is my own issue. This has nothing to do with that person. And and that's what we want to do as we kind of navigate letting go of what other people think of our parenting, just focus on ourselves, our core relationship and providing for that.



Yeah, I think that's It's really important to me said that all just really, really, really clearly and really well because that it does require work and reflection and awareness to be able to kind of pull that apart and do that very active if this is an act of work, tilt, you know, learning to it's not just, oh, I'm gonna let go of it, it is it does require work, and it does take time to do this work. And to really think about, you know, why, why is this bothering me? Why do I let this bother me? And I you know, I know same but different, right? You know, when Connor first came out, I was terrified to tell anybody and, and so worried that I was going to be judged as a parent that he was going to be judged at, you know, we didn't know anybody else in our community who, you know, childhood come out. We didn't have friends who had kids who were gay. We didn't have Family members who had kids who were gay, and just had no idea kind of how to do this. Right. And, and that was the first the first thing was what are other people going to think? And then, you know, kind of taking that step back and being like, I don't want to care what other people think. And so how do I do that and, and that's taken a lot of work and and for Connor to a ton of work. So you know, I that's why this is one of my favorites that I really wanted to put out there to everyone else too, because I think this is I know, this is something that everyone struggles with, you know, regardless, but I think specifically when you are, you know, as far as you know, my audience when your child is coming out in the coming out process, or even if they've been out for a while and you're still just trying to figure this out. This is a big one. So thank you.



Yeah, of course and I I love how you just reiterated that this is ongoing. Work and it's hard work and and that's really you know, we can move on to the next one of parenting with possibility instead of fear. Yeah because it's the same like it is at its core. It's it's that same process right? It is thinking about Okay, what am I making all of this mean? When we're

parenting from a place of fear, we are projecting into the future we're awfully we're catastrophizing, we in our brains are powerful, beautiful brains are spinning out of control. And we're writing our child's story in the worst possible way.



And



when you parent from that place, you're not going to make the best decisions, right? You're



gonna be again concerned about other people, you're going to be prioritizing other things. You're going to make bad choices. And you're also going to be doing it now with the clear head because Fear is messy. It's and it's not true. Right?



Right,



is that it's a big fat lie, right?



Oh, yeah.



So this tilt is really about and I encourage people to go to the worst case scenarios to like, what are you most afraid of? What are those deep darkest fears that you have the, you know, my child is going to be living under a bridge someday or, you know, whatever we can go. We need to confront those fears, so that we can know that they're there. I don't

think we can banish fear. I believe fear exists as a survival instinct for many of us like it's its part of our lives good or bad. Right. We want to form one icon, uneasy alliance with that fear so we can know what the fear is. We can say I see you. I know what you're trying to do. I appreciate you're trying to protect me Got this. And we want to come up with evidence for how that fear may not be true how that worst case scenario may not happen. So we're just trying to kind of poke holes in these theories, this fear that keeps us so stressed and anxious and afraid and again, making really bad decisions and instead open up to the idea that well actually maybe, maybe this isn't as bad as I think because and then come up with ideas for how it might not be. So we're kind of trying to loosen the grip of fear and open up to the possibility of what might be



right, which I think is that is so huge and that is such great work and it's, I love that you put that in there because it really does. Again, it's another this is another working tilt. I mean they're all working tilts but this you know very act of being aware of of not being afraid to confront the fear. I mean, this is fear on top of fear, right? But when we're able to kind of sit and be super aware of it and super aware of when we're in that space, where it's like being frozen, mentally, emotionally physically frozen, and letting go of that, just to start with just is huge. Right? And then recognizing I love that it's the having that uneasy alliance is such a great way to to say that because you're absolutely right. I mean, fear does serve a purpose, but its purpose should not be to rule every decision and everything we do and the whole, you know, making bad parenting decisions or just bad decisions in general when we are allowing fear to dictate those decisions. Every single time, they will be bad, they will not serve your child, they will not serve you they will not serve your family. I mean, I know that you did the same thing you look back and you think that was a decision I made based on fear that was a decision I made based on fear. And then you think about the you know, the the cleanup that you had to do, right that what you had, you know, had to go in and once you were working through and realizing, okay, this is not serving me. This is not serving my child or my family or my purpose.



What am I to do?



I mean, fear feels safe, which is why we often make choices based on fear, right? And when you can apply it to anything in your life moving across the country, taking a new

job, anytime we go outside our comfort zone. It's gonna feel scary, right? And so we don't take that job too much. Cross Country because it's we're afraid of all the unknowns, what if it's the wrong decision? What if this so then we stay, we decide, okay, I'm not going to take it, because I feel safer. But really, it's a fear based decision. Right. And so a lot of this, you know, and I write about this in the book is is, is taking the leap, it is getting comfortable being uncomfortable, but knowing that when we make the decision based on love, and we choose possibility instead of fear, it doesn't mean it will be pain less, it doesn't mean it's not going to be uncomfortable. All of those things that we are still ultimately serving our higher good, we're serving the higher good for our kids and for everyone involved. And I have yet to in my, you know, 50 years of living on this planet experienced something we're making a choice out of love has been the wrong decision. Absolutely.



I'm so glad you said that because that's, you know, I was actually saying this to myself. A few weeks ago, you know that I am choosing to move toward love. When I look at a situation am I moving towards love? Or am I moving towards fear, and really being an again, being super aware of that, right? And I think that that in and of itself takes some work to allow yourself to be aware and be present with all of these feelings because they are big and uncomfortable, but really trying to look at fear as fear is good when it is protective in the sense of saving your life or, you know, it does serve a purpose. But most times, if something seems scary, if something is like, I don't know if I should do this, that's actually a sign you should do it. The sign you should move toward it, but that's, you know, I know for you and for me, it's it's taken a long time and a lot of work. To be able to do that. So, yeah, thank you. Thank you. Thank you for sharing that. And then tilt 17 is a little bit different, which is help your kids embrace self discovery which so awesome. Just so lovely. So can you share a little bit about that one?



Yeah, I often say that one of our most important jobs as parents is to help our kids to know themselves. Like if I will consider I have done a good job of parenting my child if when he launches and goes out into his life. He understands who he is as a person. He understands the strengths he brings to the table. He understands his zone of genius. He knows how to support himself, emotionally, mentally, physically. And he also understands where, you know, some areas of lagging skills or weaknesses or deficits where he might need extra support and how to ask for what he needs right to support himself. So, right, this idea of No, like, I don't know about you, I didn't know myself at all. When I launched I, you know, I

was like, I don't, I was so not aware of who I was or what I brought to the table or my worth. And that goes back to why I wrote so many books for teen girls because I'm like, you need to know your worth. Right? But then saying that our kids, it's their best chance at really becoming self actualized fulfilled adults who can share their gifts with the world is to know who they are. And so, you know, in the context of of the book I talked about just being very open and and helping our kids engage in this process of being curious about who they are to embrace them. their uniqueness to discover in it looks different for different ages, but to really discover, like, oh, who am I? Like? How do I think about this? And what do I need? And what are my values? And what are the things that I care about most in this world? And how can I contribute? What are my gifts? And so I think of this as an ongoing conversation with our kids, but our role is to is to be the mirror for them to get curious to ask questions to support to form really deep relationships with them. So they trust us enough to be open to having these conversations in the first place.



Right, that's a really big one too. I like that you kind of ended with that because that is that's how we can best help them right. Is to to build that trust and and to be very active present listeners. They go through this, you know, encouraging this process of going back to, did I know any of this when I launched? No, it was like, I was like 40. I mean, yeah, that



totally took me a long



time. And I think that is one of my, you know, it is reason why I am so motivated to you know why that that tilt resonates with me a lot, because I think, gosh, I do want my kids to figure out, figure out who they are and where they fit in this world and explore things and sometimes things aren't gonna work out and sometimes they might be really good at something, but they may not like it. You know, I, I think my my daughter grace, I laugh that she's, she's tried, you know, over the course of her, you know, 14 years, every single sport and activity and, you know, she was she is at Phenomenal swimmer beautiful didn't like it didn't have the heart for it had the you know had the talent not the heart. And that's okay. And so figuring out these things, you know, this is this is how I figure it out and try things and let them talk it through and you know, I think too with you know, my with Connor and Isabel being older especially Connor now having been away and and really exploring his own what what he really thinks of the world being out in the world, right and

coming back with very different thoughts. This is okay, this is good. That's what we want them to do. And so, you know, like you said building that when they have that base where they feel safe, and to explore and where they trust to share is huge is So, so huge. So,



thank you



again. Thank you. I just, I love this book. So, parents, this is a really valuable read. I talked earlier about our connection, but I really just think that even though this isn't specific to having an LGBTQ child, holy cow, you just really hit some things right on the head that everybody can relate to. So thank you so much. Saying that actually moves on to our next question, which is, many of the parents in my audience do have children who are either lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender and they don't fit into that societal round hole. Right there. We have square pegs and in a totally different way than then we've talked about, can you give or do You have any advice? You know, based on your research based on your experience that you can give to these parents?



I think the first thing that I would just say and that is something I I try to implore to any parent who is discovering their child's not who they thought they were, what they expected is to just, I mean, there's there's so many pieces to this, but to first just know that your child is who they are intended to be that they're not broken. They do not need fixing that they are. I talk about kids being an all humans being creative, resourceful and whole, they are here on their own journey. And they are just absolutely perfect as they are. And so that can take a while for people to realize that that their kid isn't broken and doesn't need fixing. But that is critical. If we are To have the relationship we just talked about and help our kids feel safe and so that they can, they can kind of feel good about who they are, and discover who they are without stigma or, or pain or or feeling like we don't have their backs. Right. Right. That's, that's where I would start. And I think it is really important that we all and I know this is a big part of your work that we confront the ideas that we had about who our kids would be, we confront thinking and beliefs that we have surrounding you know, in my case, neuro divergence and in your audience's cases, you really do need to confront the ideas you have about homosexuality and being transgender and bisexual and, and all the different variations. You know, we all have, we're all wired to and we've grown up with our belief systems and we've grown up with with our own eyes. Ideas

however they got there. And we need to confront those so we can do the work. This is always about doing that work on ourselves to. So we can then approach our relationship with our kids with clean energy without all that residual baggage without all that messiness, but we have to confront it in order to get through to that clean energy. Right?



Right. We do confront it, embrace it. And I think you hit on two beautiful things right there. You know, I talk a lot about the movie, our movie reel has changed, right? The movie reel that when we have have these little babies, we have this. It every parent does it, we don't even realize we're doing it right. And when that movie reel changes that can really throw us for a loop and so realizing that the changes and it's not bad, it's just a change. And, and our job is to embrace that change and pivot in the way that we need to pivot knowing that they do not need to be fixed. I love that you said that, thank you, they are not broken. because trust me when I tell you, they are already thinking that they think that they're broken, they think that they need to be fixed, they think there's something wrong. So if they are picking up that vibe from us,



that's not helping anything.



That's not going to help them work through their process. That's not going to there's zero benefit to that. So really, just looking at this, like, wow, this is a gift. And yeah, I'm gonna have to do some work, but that's one of the you know, the beautiful jobs of being a parent. This is what we you know, took on leave It wasn't necessarily in the manual, but you know, this is part of it. And and part of really launching these beautiful whole humans out into the world.



Right. I love what you said. And I will just add that. I do think this is a gift and I think, you know, you could hear them say, Oh gosh, you know, oh, this is a gift. Like I don't see that. But here's why I think it is. Of course, all children are gifts and we all learn through who our kids are right? They point us in the direction of what we need to know. However, when you have a kid who demands more of you as a parent when you whether that's because

they're no divergent or because they're, they're gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, questioning what anytime you have a kid who isn't fitting in the box, they are going to demand more from us as parents, they're going to require that we show up to them in a way that a parent who's got a kid who's just kind of moving through, in a more typical way, isn't going to be required to do. And the beauty of that is the kinds of relationships we can have with these people with these kids. It's so incredible. I mean, it was that to me, I think I've got a 15 year old. We are like two peas in a pod. How many 15 year olds Do you know love to hang out with their mom? Like, we have such a deep connection? And that's because he demanded I showed up and I said, I will. I'm here for you. And we have created an and connection because of based on respect, and curiosity and trust, and that is I never imagined this is what parenthood could bring. But I think that these kids, they create the possibility for our lives as parents to be so much richer.



Absolutely. Thank you for building on that, because that is that's absolutely right. And that is that does kind of give the give the depth to why this is a gift, right? It gives the reasoning behind it. And I you know, I think about that I think about that all the time how grateful I am now because thinking back you know, I think Gosh, I I I have always had you know a good relationship with my kids I've loved being a mom Yes, it's it's hard. But I had no idea what what hard really was you know in the past three years have been extraordinary. And but I wouldn't give that up for the world because the not only the relationship that Connor and I have now, but the relationship that I have with Isabel grace and Rowan and that they have with each other and that we have as a family unit. It's my life. It's my life and I you know, there are there are not words for it, hang in there and and do do the work. People. That's, that's that's the the bottom line here. It's so



totally worth it coming from two moms who've done it. Right. It's totally totally worth it. Holy cow. So moving into our our last



question and I just want to talk about



all the work that you're doing because I I just admire it so much. And I think it's quite, quite extraordinary that the people that you're creating such a lovely community for our therefore and your support community with your book, your podcast, your Facebook page, right. It's a two part question. So first, what has been like the most fun discovery for you or most rewarding experience when it come has come to creating this lovely tilt parenting community.



Well, it has been the best job I've ever had. I will say that, you know, I have always been someone. As I said earlier, I create what I need or what I needed. And so I felt very driven to make sure that no other parent in my shoes, experiences, the isolation and the overwhelm and the pain that I went through. I want them to know, Hey, man, you're a part of an awesome club. And we've got you and here are some great resources. So that's why I created it. And I guess what has been so incredible is just that it's the response like it's worked. You know, I spent a year probably really researching and crafting a manifesto to launch to it with I had a you know, I had a newsletter list of two people, you know, my sister and my husband, I didn't No idea what the response was going to be. And whether or not this work was going to resonate with people. And the reaction has been so overwhelming. I get emails, still, every day people are still discovering the podcast and they take time out of their day to write me taste along notes, they tell me their story and how much they see some of their experience and what I've shared and how they finally feel like they're part of a tribe and they and they are crying tears of relief, and that is incredibly humbling for me. And it gives me renewed sense of purpose every day to keep doing what I'm doing, because I definitely have days where I'm like, why did you create all this work for yourself? I really would like to just, you know, yeah, on the couch and read for a while and I'm, I'd probably be bored within a day but anyway, right. Hey, it's really lovely to get that feedback and to know that the work that I'm doing and these things that I just thought were important to share has landed in such a powerful way. And I feel, I don't know if this is true, maybe it's just who I hang out with, because I'm completely surrounded now by people who think the same way I do and authors and parenting experts, but I really feel like there is a shift. I feel like there is a growing awareness of this entire movement, and we are becoming our kids are becoming so much more accepting and inclusive of other ways of being. And, you know, I see that shift. I feel like we're making progress, and that's really inspiring to me.



I would say you definitely are absolutely I noticed that in in my kids too. And I think that's

pretty cool. You know that they are just so self accepting and so very, very well done. Because that is I mean, I love that Thank you for sharing kind of where you started with this too, because I think that's important for people to know that you you created this from scratch. And and you didn't know if it was going to work or if you were going to have, you know, really touch touch anyone, right? And that was the hope. And we share a very similar hope, which is, you know, we don't want parents to feel alone. We don't want them to feel that they're walking through these experiences by themselves. And so I think that's, that's really powerful. So thank you. Thank you.



And your podcast. Just really quickly before we wrap



up here, you have some really, really interesting guests. Can you just kind of give a just a, you know, 32nd one minute like, here's, here's what my podcast is about, because I, you know, I think people would be very interested in curious to listen.



Sure. Thank you. Yeah, I just released Episode 208



yesterday.



Holy cow,



Okay, wait really quickly before you tell? Do you still edit all of your episodes by yourself? I didn't have somebody do it year and a half. I've



had someone do the editing happy. Yeah.



Is there so much easier? Holy cow.



I mean, it does cuz of course I was a one woman show bands, you know the whole thing people were like, could you please I get emails? Can



you please



have someone I'm like, Who do you think someone is? It's all right.



Yeah, totally. That's me.



That's me. That's me. That's me. So, yeah, but the podcast. You know, I started off with a list of dream guests that I wanted to interview and they were the authors of all the books lining my bookshelf, you know, and I, honestly, I've had all of them on at this point. Because now I can just say, hey, so and so look at all these other guests. I have Add on Will you be on my show? It is been Andrew Solomon's the only one. He wrote the book for our industry. He has agreed to come on, but we haven't been able to find the time. So he's the one who still from that initial list, but I interview, you know, parenting experts, the authors of all the parenting books that any parent would have in their their bookshelf, I try to keep tabs on what's new. I also I did more than 20 episodes with my son that we coded when he was a little younger to give parents a peek inside his mind because he's really articulate about weight restriction or distraction feels like for a little guy, of course, His

voice is a lot lower now than it was in those episodes. And then sometimes I just have conversations with parents, where we kind of talk about what's going on in their lives, but I just had Tina Paine Bryson on which was one of my most favorite interviews I've done to date, and we just had the most inspiring conversation. I leave every conversation learning so much and then I listened to it again in the editing process. And I learned more so right it's the gift that keeps on giving. I will say



it totally is they totally is. Yes, I could not agree with you more. It's fascinating and fun and, and I do you do have such a wide variety of people and holy cow. Congratulations. That's a huge number and I know how much work that



is. That's awesome.



I mean, accomplishment. I love it. I love it. So much fun and I love the you know the the episodes with your son are so fantastic. And Connor and I were just talking the other day we are in the process of creating another. We've done just one episode together, but now we're creating a series to do so. So a little similar. Yeah,



so far. I will say when I did those, I initially did it with the intention to help other parents maybe have a better understanding of what their child's experience might be. What I didn't expect was that parents were going to co listen with their little kids. And that's what has happened. So I get so much feedback. Like I listened to this with my 11 year old and they were like, Oh my gosh, that kid sounds just like me. Like it's helped kids



feel cars.



Oh, I'm not the only one like this. And so that has been huge for them. So I didn't. That was completely unexpected. And it's just a big gift I think of



Yes, that's, I love that. That is so awesome. Oh, my goodness. Well, Debbie, I do not want to keep you any longer. This has been so so wonderful to have you here today and have you on my show. And it's it's an honor for me. So thank you. Thank you.



And



thanks for inviting me. I mean, you and I've been friends for Wow. So it was written but we haven't had this conversation. So this has been really fun.



I know, I know, I was really excited when I you know, again, the light bulb moment I was like, we have to do this, this will be so much fun. So, anyway, so thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you.



Thank you so much for joining me today. Check out the show notes for all of the resources that Debbie and I mentioned. And if you like this podcast, please take a minute to subscribe rate and review it on Apple podcasts or Spotify. And as always, please share with anyone who needs to know that they are not alone. Until next time,