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Todd: Here we go. My name's Todd. This is Cathy. Welcome back to another episode of Zen Parenting Radio. This is podcast number 719 why listen to Zen Parenting Radio because you'll feel outstanding and always remember our motto since I think the very beginning, which is the best predictor of a child's wellbeing is a parent's self understanding.

On today's show, we have an old friend named John O'sullivan. Hey, John. John was one of our first kind of professional friends we made. Isn't that right, sweetie?

Cathy: Yeah. I think we were at like one of our first professional like dinners
in

Todd: la That's another podcast. But that was an interesting night. So, John, I could either read your bio, which I think would be layman boring, but just tell the listeners who you are, what your expertise is, and [00:01:00] then we'll jump into it.

John: Yeah, sure. Well, it's great to virtually see you guys again. It's been too long. That was the beginning of what I do now as well, way back then. So, these days I run an organization called changing the Game Project. Also host a podcast called Wave of Champions. And I feel so lame because we've only done like 330 episodes.

So, compared to you two we're nothing but Yeah, so basically my organization we do consulting and parent education and coach education and athlete and team development, leadership development throughout sports. So we work with everything from clubs and schools to universities and sport governing bodies.

And yeah, written a couple books and I guess we're here to talk about one of them today, but it's all always so, such a [00:02:00] pleasure to talk to you two and I'm just, the work you do is just amazing.

Todd: Thanks John. Name of the book is The Champion Team, timeless Lessons to Connect, compete and Lead in Sports and Life.

And here's my thing, I am guessing that there might be some parents out there like, ah, sports not my thing. My kids don't do sports, blah, blah, blah. Like, I wanna frame this conversation not through a lens of sports, even though it will

just seep into it. It's, I think of me, you know, cuz the way you write it, John, with your co-author who sounds like a really interesting guy, by the way.

Is through the lens of a team like this is for a soccer coach or a football coach. I wanna, I wanted to have this discussion through the lens of I am a team leader on this team called the Adams family. Not the TV show. And Cathy's my co-coach and then my other three kids. My three kids are the players.

And I really think almost everything in this book that that I read and I read, 90% of it [00:03:00] ha It can be very easily substituted for parenting. And I think that will be as valuable, if not more than how do we get our kids to be good teammates on their soccer team? Does that sound like a

Cathy: good idea?

Well, and I'll also say I think that, cuz I totally agree with you, Todd. I wanna like do the overview and how this connects to every aspect of our life. But like, on the other, like, just flipping that script, what I so appreciated about your book, John, is all the words that you and ~~your co-author~~, you know, co-author were using around belonging and resiliency and facing obstacles and and how we treat each other and compassion.

You know, I mean, I know those words have been thrown around in sports. It's not like it's brand new, but the way you write was so, ~~it wa it~~, it put me at ease. I'm like, okay, this is a path we can do. And so it's like even on the, you know, if, for those of you who are listening just through the lens of sports you know, and how to support your kids in this process, or you know, your own team what you and your author are talking about.

It's so foundational just [00:04:00] for us as human

John: beings. Yeah. Well, thank you. You know, what I'd say is I'll give, so Jerry Lynch is my co-author and gotta give him kudos as well. Jerry is a sports psychologist. He's been at it for, you know, four plus decades. When I first met you guys, you know, I had written my first book and I'd done a TED talk about creating this environment that would allow kids to thrive in any achievement activity.

Didn't ha have to be sports. It could be school music, whatever. And one of the biggest pushbacks like I'm a very competitive guy. I was a competitive athlete. I played division one sports, professional soccer, coached at that level. But people would say, oh, well, you know, my kid's competitive or whatever.

So I met Jerry, right? And Jerry at that time had teams that had won, I think, you know, 36 NCA titles, right? He had [00:05:00] won professional championships, he had golfers win p g a tour events, you know, he had all this stuff and he was talking about the same stuff. And I was like, wow. Like th this is it, right?

Here's someone who's teaching the same things, and his teams are incredibly successful in competitive sport. So this isn't anti-competitive stuff, or, you know, this is actually what is the root of competition, which is, you know, to strive with your opponent to better yourself. And so, you know, when we decided to write this book, It's because we do this team development work and because we're constantly working with athletes and I feel like, you know, and Todd like to go to your question, you know, the back cover of the book, the first thing that we write is you're going to be part of teams your whole life, right?

Your family, your church, your community, your school, your work team, whatever it is. And whether you're trying to win on the field or chasing [00:06:00] a sales goal, teams are teams and people are people. And so oftentimes, you know, children's first introduction is their family team and their sports team. And in sport, especially in youth sport, we're so rarely intentional about teaching people to be a great teammate.

And as you two know, I mean the world we live in, the messages that kids are getting all day long says exactly the opposite. Get what's mine, become famous, become rich, how many likes, how much attention can I draw to myself? And yet that doesn't really play well in real life. And so when Jerry and I were like we wanted to write the book that we would use with our own teams that we work with, but the same token, we're like, Hey, this is a book for, you know, anyone who is a part of a team to understand how can I be better?

Because if I'm a good teammate I'll always be in demand. [00:07:00] Exactly.

Todd: Okay, so first thing is before we jump into the book, it's called the Champion Team Teammate. I just wanna like quickly remind our audience if you've shown up recently, we did interview John a long time ago. What was the name of your first book?

I forget. Changing the game. Changing the game. So it's funny, I don't remember the title, but I remember the biggest lesson from that book that I used as a parent. Sweetie, do you remember what that lesson is or no? No. It's the words that you're supposed to say to that you're supposed to say. It's the imitation that John asks of what you should say to your kids at the conclusion of the game.

Todd says

Cathy: it all the time. I know it. I love to

Todd: watch you play. I love watching you play. I love to watch you play, and that is worth the price of the book right there. I mean, obviously there's so many other nuggets that are

Cathy: valuable. Wasn't John's book also the let the kid get in the car and don't say anything for a while?

Shut up. Yeah. Yeah. We really integrated a lot of that.

Todd: What was great about that interview was John told us a story about him [00:08:00] not taking his own advice.

John: Yeah. Do you want me to tell that again? Yeah. Real. Yeah. Yeah. So it was super funny. And I tell this a lot when I give talks because it's just, you know, as parents, we're not.

You know, we're not perfect. We all screw up. Like, I, you know, most of the stuff I write is just things that I've messed up myself. And so, yeah, this was when my son, who was really young at the time, five years old, four years old, he is playing his first soccer game. And I was the coach. I'm supposed to be this All-Star coach, and he walks out in the field his first game and he goes yeah, I don't wanna play.

And I was like, first game. I'm like, okay, hey fine, no problem. And I coached the game and we go to practice that week and he plays with his buddies and is fine. And we go week two and the kid and the kids are like, you know, everyone else getting ready to play and there's a game before and a bunch of tall adults yelling at kids.

And he just goes, I'm not playing. And now [00:09:00] I was embarrassed, right? And I was like upset and. I'm thinking to myself, I'm supposed to be the All-Star coach. My own kid won't play. He's perfectly happy cuz he found like a lizard or something over on the side of the field. So he's perfect. Right? And so yeah, we get in the car afterwards and I'm putting on my seatbelt, I'm driving and he's in the back and I'm like, so, TJ and my wife can tell I'm upset and she just kind of gives me the old karate chop across the chest.

And I was like, what was that for? She's like, really? Didn't you just write a book about this? Like, and then she was right. You know, and so, yeah. It's just it's a funny thing. But well, John,

Cathy: have to ask, what was TJ feeling? What was the bottom line of all that? And not that there was like a one solution, but there's obviously something it was about the people.

Was it about like, what was it?

John: Yeah, PR probably. And if I know anything about, I have two kids, right? They're both they'll be a senior and junior in high school as this upcoming year. [00:10:00] My daughter, my oldest is sort of the jump off the cliff and grow your wings on the way down person. You know, she'll just try, jump into anything.

And my son is very much like, let's see if this is a good fit. ~~And I spent~~ And so I was much more like my daughter, right? Try everything, do everything, play every sport, whatever. And so my, I learned so much about myself raising my son because I had to constantly check myself, had to constantly you know, take a breath, give him the time and space to figure stuff out.

And it's funny. Because I know that like if I had pushed him into things like our family, like we like to ski, and we, you know, there was times where like, no, we're going tough luck. Right? But if I pushed him into things, he wouldn't have done them. But because we [00:11:00] didn't, like, we introduced them and then we backed off and now he's an avid snowboarder and an avid mountain biker and we get to do all these things together that if I, you know, said, wow, he swung that golf club well.

Let's go next stop PGA Tour, you know, would, we're homeschooling, you know, he'd had just quit a month later, you know? And so, yeah, so, well,

Todd: it's funny. So the book the newest book has three parts in it. Part one is connection, which I obviously I love. Part two is compete, and then part three is lead.

And we're gonna jump around, but specifically through your example that you just shared, John, regarding you being in the car in Chapter 11, it's Don't React, Respond. And have this acronym that I've used. I actually learned it through a Tony Robbins workshop, but E plus R equals O, right?

And I just wonder if you can maybe navigate your experience of how it would've been different if you would've used the E plus R equals O in relation to [00:12:00] your son. Does that make sense?

John: Yes. Yeah, sure. And and I think actually the there's a guy named Kim Kite from Columbus, Ohio, who I believe is the originator of that.

And he does a lot of business development and leadership stuff. And anyway e plus R equals o event plus response equals outcome. And it's this idea that you, the, that your outcome is far more affected by your response to something than it is the event itself. And so in sport, it's a bad call. And now we can choose to react, lose our heads, yell and scream at the referee, whatever, or we can choose to respond, take a deep breath, play the next play, move on, refocus, whatever it is.

And so, yeah, I mean, I just think that's amazing life advice, right? Is that, but because also events are out of our control, right? Competition, that whole [00:13:00] section of the book, Like, what we teach our teams is don't show up to win. Show up to compete, right? When you show up to win the outcome depends on so many things outside of yourself, officials, weather fields, bad calls.

Your opponent could just be really good, right? Whereas if you show up to compete, you control that, right? Have I prepared? Did I sleep? Have I eaten? Do I know the game plan? I control my attitude, my effort, all that. And so when everything's in my control, I have much more confidence. I have much more, you know, less stress and anxiety because I own what's happening.

So,

Champion Teammate in Parenting

Todd: so sweetie, let's bring this into parenting. Okay. So I mean, I don't wanna gloss over how important this one teeny part of the book is. If we just did E plus R equals O as a parent and every time our kids, not every time our kids walk in the door, something happened out there in the world. It's sucks.

I get scared and I wanna fix or whatever. If [00:14:00] I can instead not try to fix. And really, respond from a place, ground myself, center myself. And then respond from a place of not fixing, but listening and compassion. Then the outcome of that exchange between me and my daughter would be completely different, sweetie.

Cathy: Yeah. And I, you know, and I'm like, tacking this on, this isn't really a thing, but like, you know, equals outcome. And then I would put another equals relationship. Because when you, when those accumulate over time, the event plus your response to it and then the outcome, then that will dictate how your relationship goes.

That will dictate whether your children talk to you when they're struggling with something or when they're not feeling confident or when they do need support. Because if your response, or I should say, if your reaction is judgmental or, you know, doubting of them, or blaming or just so you know the emotions are not regulated or you're not agile with them, then this is where parents misunderstand.

They'll say that, my [00:15:00] kid knows I love them, they should come to me. But that e r o, if that happens over and over again where they're getting this feeling of shame or guilt after talking to you, or judgment, they know that's in their, they're like, that's not the person I'm going to. I'm not gonna go talk to my parents about this.

You know, I'm gonna go somewhere else. So that's just another part of relationship to, or. A part of what you were talking about with teams is who you are to these people, not just parents, but the coach the manager. Are you someone that is trusted and dependable, or are you someone that they're trying to avoid?

John: Yeah. ~~And I think, you know, sorry to interrupt there, Cathy. No, please.~~ That's one, one of my natural reactions and the poor responses. Oh, please. But you know, I just as you're saying that, I'm thinking, you know, coaching and parenting are very similar. And the one thing that we always talk about is, you know, when I go to coach a team I, you know, I always call it [00:16:00] the trust bank, right?

Like you, you have to build a relationship that can bear the burden of truth as a parent and as a coach, 100%. And so when you start, right, you have a. It's like, think of it as a bank. Your balance is zero. And I think it's so important, and especially as a parent right, to that you're making deposits early on because you're going to have to make withdrawals.

Right. And I think it's a coach, it's the same thing. A lot of coaches step in and they start making withdrawals and they wonder why the kids pull away or their families pull away and there's no trust, right? And so it, it's the same thing as, a parent. And so early on, I remember when I was, you know, coaching and I was

coaching 15, 16 year olds and my kids were really little and you know, I was complaining to some of the parents, you know, probably cuz I hadn't slept or you know, whatever.

And they just like looked at me like [00:17:00] small kids, small problems, big kids, big problems. You know? And I, it's always stuck in my head and. I think my wife and I have worked very hard with our children to build that relationship and that trust so that, you know, when we get the phone call now that at, you know, midnight says, Hey, can you come pick me up?

I need a ride home. Yeah. There are no questions. Like, yep, we'll be right there. And that's the kind of thing that just I think is so, so important. And what I see a lot from parents is they don't make those deposits and then they can't make the withdrawals. And so they either blow up the relationship trying to make them, or they just say yes to everything and they don't give kids the boundaries that they need.

Todd: So have you been able to cultivate that trust where they call at midnight and you don't answer questions and they will call if or when they need that support? You know, friends during driving [00:18:00] drunk, whatever the case is, they, yeah. You have, you and your wife have made enough deposits where that will actually happen.

John: Yeah. And it has happened. And it happens. And again we've done it and, you know, if it happened three nights a week, now there's problems. Right? Right. Exactly. But if it happens, you know, once every two months or whatever, like o okay, let's go fix that. And then, you know, or kids are pretty open about, well, hey, this is what happened, so.

And Well, thank you for calling us. That was great decision because,

Todd: To your point, a lot of times people weaponize something, Cathy and I will say, which is, you know, exactly the example we're talking about. Whereas if your kid needs support being called at midnight not asking questions, then you know, a parent will say, well, what if they do that five nights a week?

Like, yeah, well then it's a different situation, but people tend to just. You know, go all in on one thing and it's never all in sweetie.

Cathy: And well, I was gonna say and I still am like, but it's the same answer because [00:19:00] if my child was struggling with something consistently, I

still need that same relationship to have an influence in that possibly very difficult time for them.

So I think we really, and this so connects to sports, John, this is why I love these conversations with you, because we so quickly go to this authoritarian or this like rigid or dictatorship mi mentality of like, well, things are going off the rails, so I am gonna reign it in and no one's gonna do this and we're not gonna talk about this.

And we go And I feel like it's very fear-driven. And that, because we do really run to, like Todd said, if something goes wrong, but what if this happens all the time and I got a whole, and there's no trust in human beings. And I'm not just talking about our own individual children, but humans, that's not how we're wired.

We would like to be successful if we're struggling. We don't wanna be struggling. Like we would like support and we, but it's very fear-based. Like, and I'm sure you find this with, you know, with parents, but also with coaches, you know, that mentality of I've gotta keep control versus [00:20:00] have relationship.

John: A hundred percent.

And I think this whole, you know, growth happens when you struggle. Yeah. Right? That's when growth happens. And our natural inclination as parents from the first moment is to protect our kids from Right. As, as soon as they get sick, they're not sleeping. We wanna comfort them. Right. And I mean, I think that's why like the hardest moment, one of the hardest moments as a parent is the first time you're like, no, I'm gonna lay here and let 'em cry it out and sleep through the night.

You know, or whatever it is, you know, and it's like, oh my god. You know, so, so in all these moments of growth, that's when struggle happens. That's when it's difficult. And as a parent, I think you're always navigating, when do I intervene versus when do I step back and help my kids see, well, what's good about this?

Right? What's good about your hard teacher, your difficult coach, whatever, versus, oh, something's crossed the [00:21:00] line into dangerous. And now as the adult I st I step in. Yes. Because I know better, you know, and and so you're constantly, you know, you're constantly doing that. And again, you get it wrong.

So. Sometimes as well, but.

Todd: Well, that's what's funny. Parenting is an art form. Like there's no rules. Cathy and I have been doing a podcast for however many years, like 13 years. There's no like, okay, this is how you do it. Because there are times when we do have to step in and step into our leadership and maybe have exert a little more control, but it's.

Very rare that would happen, sweetie, what are you gonna say?

Cathy: Well, and I was gonna say, that's the layered thing here, is just as we are watching our children struggle, or we're trying to figure out when to step in, and we're struggling in the moment as well is this the time that I step in?

Ooh. I step, I stepped in too quickly. Yeah. Or I stepped in too late. And then sometimes you glean lessons from that, like, you know, next time. But really it's not the next time you may need to do it differently. There [00:22:00] is no, and this is the thing about human beings, that there are no hard and fast rules.

There's things that we do and that we play with. And I like the word art. You know, you really have to be agile. You have to be an athlete. Right. Well, John, you know, you have to figure out how to do this.

Todd: John said that growth happens through struggle. Yeah. And I, I don't know if this is true or not, but I'm getting to the point in my life where I don't think any learning happens through success.

Now, maybe that's not true. Maybe there is some learning. But as we talk about these challenges as being parents, like if we could reframe, you know, whenever we get, whenever I get reactive and my kids come home with a problem or whatever and I don't do it well, then it's I could be like, oh, poor me. Or I could be like, this is an opportunity for me to visit this experience through a different lens or with a different energy.

So I, here's my question. Do you think all growth happens through struggle or can we also grow through when you score that goal or when your kid tells you that they [00:23:00] love you with all their heart, which, you know, still waiting for those types of conversations to happen. Our kids are so self-involved.

They say that to you. They do. It's just,

Cathy: I would just say don't throw them under the bus.

Todd: It just doesn't happen as often as we want them to as parents.

Cathy: Well, when we're directing them, they're not like, thank you so much for the direction. Exactly. But just say they.

Todd: Exactly. That's true. That's true. So does any growth happen through success or is it all through struggle?

John: Well, I think anytime you have success, It's not like, oh, I just won the lottery. Right? I didn't randomly pick some numbers and then it happened, right? So if I had success on the sports field, maybe in that moment, right? Usually what happens is validation, right? And that's where I think the coach or the parent can step in instead of saying, wow, look at you.

You're so talented, right? This is when we talk about growth mindset, right? It's not, it's like, wow, you've been working so hard and today it all came together for you and let's connect the, where's all the threads of those days [00:24:00] when you had tears in your eyes, when you struggled, when you were upset.

That's what happened to today. And you can't have one without the other. You know? I mean, you, we tell the teams that I coach or they work with, like, if you're gonna feel the moment of. The most incredible victory. You also have to be prepared for those moments of utter heartbreak. One does not happen without the other.

Once you're in the arena, in sport and and in relationships, I mean, you're gonna, if you're gonna fall in love, you're gonna also get your heartbroken.

Todd: Well, and along those same lines you shared I appreciated this small story in the book where it was talking about learning through failure. And you had an experience in high school with John where you had a teacher hand you back a paper that you thought you did well on, and you got a big fat F on it.

Did you share that story?

John: Yeah, sure. And so what we call these things rule of one [00:25:00] moments, right? One person, one comment, one time can change your life. And I don't know that I've ever met anyone who doesn't have a moment like this from a teacher, a friend a coach, trusted colleague or whatever.

And so, yeah, that was 11th grade. Brother Jeff. Brother Jeff Peterson. I went to a Catholic high school on Long Island and you know, I got a big fat red f of my paper. And I was a good student, I was just lazy. And I said, brother Jeff, like, there's no way this paper's an f I know it's better than other people.

And he is like, John, I didn't give you an F based on what they can write. I gave you an F based on what you can write. And this is crap. Sorry. It's a non explicit podcast. Yeah, I won't use his exact words, but you know, this was the eighties and whatever. And then, and so then he he goes then he grabs my books and he throws them out the third story window of, you know, and he goes, get out of my classroom and don't come back until you're willing to [00:26:00] give me your best effort because you are a great writer.

And that was the first time in my life I ever thought of myself as a good writer. Right? That was the moment. Right. And. I've de not only dedicated my books to Brother Jeff, right, who's no longer in the priesthood. He actually is a vice president of a college now, and we reconnected a couple years ago and everything like that.

And and he had read my books and he was like, again, here's the thing. He didn't remember this moment course, the moment that changed my life was part of his normal day. He had no idea. But this is the power that we wield as teachers and coaches and parents as well. And you know, the interesting part about that as well is, you know, I went home that day.

I was pissed. I was angry at Brother Jeff and how dare he and whatever. And I remember going home and, you know, complaining to my dad, you know, [00:27:00] and you know, my dad was, you know, the Irish Catholic from the Bronx and, you know, New York City firefighter. I just blah, blah, blah, complaining. He goes, was he Right?

And I was like, well, what do you mean? He goes, well, you know, is what he said true? I'm like, well, yeah. He goes, then what are you complaining about? Right. And I think of today how many parents would've been on the phone with the principal or the board of the school board and the fire, the teacher.

And you know, and it's like, and it just took my dad to be like, this is struggle. This is an important lesson. Right. And it could have totally been missed if my dad in that moment didn't say, well, was he Right?

Todd: Well, there was some, there's some shock value to how he chose to give you this lesson. And I would categorize Yeah.

Challenge your energy. Like he did something kind of impactful [00:28:00] to wake you up. Yeah. And my question is, and I don't, you know, brother Jeff did what brother Jeff did, and obviously the story ends well. I just wonder if there

is, would there have been another way for him to communicate that message to you in a way that would've landed as well?

Or this is he knew you well enough to know that this is the only way you're gonna wake up?

John: You know, yeah. I mean, I think we have to add the caveat that, like I said, this is 40 something years ago, and I don't know that you get away with that today, nor maybe should you or whatever, but 100% right.

This was the teacher that I knew, well, I'd had him before. I, you know, he was one of those teachers that I'd go and hang out in his classroom and we were close, right? So this was this was an act of love. This was not an act of fear or intimidation. This was an act of love. And it's what he knew I needed in that moment.

And I think, you know, the art of coaching or the art of parenting, [00:29:00] Is recognizing who's in front of me and what do they need in this moment. Right? And do they need a hug or do they need some, you know, a little discipline? Do they need, you know, that's the art, right? And the best coaches and I think the parents who have those best relationships recognize it because even, you know, when your kid needs that nudge or that kick in the pants, sometimes it doesn't mean there's not moments where they just need a hug.

Right? And just need love and be like, you know what? Like, come here, it's gonna be okay. Let's have a bowl of ice cream. And we can work through this tomorrow. Yeah,

Cathy: absolutely. You know, I know Todd's got like a structure that he wants to go through with it. I like it like this. I know I bring, I'm bringing this question right in the middle because I ta, I'm talking to moms all the time, and their [00:30:00] sons and daughters are athletes and they, their greatest concern or the thing that I hear over and over again, and they always are like, do you know a therapist who can help my child?

Because their identity has become completely around sports and. When they get injured, or if they aren't played, or if they're not gonna make this team in high school, or if they don't get a scholarship to college, I'm afraid my child is going to fall apart because their entire foundation is built on this identity of being an athlete, which has been very driven by culture, which has been, you know, we have all these good reasons.

Like, and I know this is such a big part of, you know, what you write about and talk about the importance of teams, the importance of sports, but when it gets to this point where then a kid doesn't even know who they are beyond it,

Identity

Cathy: can you speak to that in any way you want? Like how do you talk to parents and coaches about identity with kids?

John: I mean, I think [00:31:00] this is pretty. Accepted what everything you said is true, right? That many children in sport and I mean it could be the same thing around piano, right? Sure. Like, let's face it, it's not just sport, but that they're, they, instead of becoming John, the guy who plays soccer, it's John, the soccer player.

So yeah, I get hurt, I get cut, I get whatever my whole life and the structure around it fails. This has been driven by our society of early specialization and more and more younger. So that so many kids lose many aspects of their childhood because of sport. Right. That, you know, it's all about you know, every weekend in the summer is another baseball tournament.

And so, that's my friend group and that's whatever, but yeah. It's not super healthy. Now here's like, here's the [00:32:00] interesting part, right? To truly become an elite competitor, you almost have to lose yourself in it. It requires a level of ruthlessness and selfishness and all this sort of stuff. And that's why we see, I mean, what we now have is lots of pros leaving sport and talking about this issue, right?

That they really struggle in transition out of sport, right? Pros get help with that. 15 year olds often don't. Right? And so, so it's this really important thing as a parent that we recognize it. Someone, you know, it's really interesting you asked that question cuz someone asked me. I got a really interest in the email this morning actually based on a recent podcast I did.

And the question the listener posed was, are some people, are some kids addicted to sport? [00:33:00] Right? Like, are they addicted? And I, you know, I thought about that, but the question that popped into my head is, are some parents addicted to their kid being in sport? Yeah. Right. It's their friend group.

It's their thing. When you cut a kid off a team or put 'em on a B team, you're also removing parents from the people they've hung out with for four years. And so I think oftentimes the problem is not with that unicorn athlete who's super

focused, competitive, and driven. It's the parent who's super focused, competitive, and driven on behalf of the kid who could probably take it or leave it, right?

And then that sort of, they impose that upon the child. Who then struggles a lot of times cuz they see their mom or dad struggling.

Cathy: Right. I see this as a cycle often with parents where, you know, when they're, when the kids are young and the parents are like, you know, I'm gonna help you with this sport.

Maybe they played or they kind of know the scene or [00:34:00] they just really want their kid involved and then they help them and then the kid recognizes that as a way to connect with their parent. And they also may like it. Like this isn't, this is very, again, this is very multi-layered. And then they come back and ask for help.

And so the. Parent goes back in and you know, makes sure that, you know, let's get on the travel team and let's do this. And then it's this back and forth. But no one's really asking the other, is this what we want? You know, or the kid, you know, I'll just go to the side that you just said. The kid is like, well, this is what my parents want me to do.

This is who we are. This is the culture of our family. And there is, and so, and then sometimes it's hard. It becomes very enmeshed. Enmeshed where like, you're not the kid's like, but I don't know. This is what I do now. I, and again, there's no big answer in here that where it's like, well then do this. But I think the thing is just being able to.

Talk to your kid about where they are now, what they want. Do they enjoy this? Do they get things out of it? Cuz sometimes we forget to even connect to are they experiencing joy? [00:35:00]

Todd: So what I hear you saying is, as parents, we gotta check ourselves. Is this about us? And let's just assume for a second, it's not about us and kids.

Yeah. That our kids really drove us. The kids just happens to be you know, completely fanatical about being a gym rat, playing basketball, whatever it is. I mean, there's no, to your point sweetie, there's no like, okay, this is what you do then. Right? Other than like, you have a discussion around it.

Like, okay, I help me understand why you think this is the only thing. And then like, start diving in like, okay, what does that say about you? If you think that if you blow your knee out and you can't be a football player anymore, how does that equate your value? And then you bring your own experiences into it.

I like, there's no, right, there's no perfect response to that. Is there. No. Are you asking

Cathy: either one? Yeah, John I'd like John to

John: respond. Yeah. No, I mean, again, you're, you, I think you're constantly checking in. You're constantly saying, is this still the path we wanna be in? You know, a lot of parents go down this path of, well, we've already [00:36:00] invested so much, we can't stop now.

Right, right. That this is an investment. Without checking in or recognizing, oh, my kid checked out about a year and a half ago. You, they've been going through the motions. And so that's the challenge. You know, like, you know, I'll give the example. Like my daughter, we were talking off camera.

She's gonna be a senior in high school. She's looking at colleges. She could play college soccer. She doesn't want to. Right. But she's known this for a while. And so, you know, she backed off and found some other interests, but she just, we just went to her final club soccer event Western US Championships couple weeks ago, and it was awesome.

And she could, you know, most, she's a late birthday, so most of her teammates are graduating this year. She's got another year and she could have played another year. She's like, you know, no, I love that team. I love that group. I'm done. Like, I just wanna just, you know, do other things. Next year I'll play high school soccer and I'll do [00:37:00] that.

And I just think it's great that she has this sense of self that was something that she loved to do, but it wasn't her right. And she's like, you know, I wanna, like, I maybe play club in college or something like that, but, I don't think it's something that I want to dedicate 20 or 30 hours a week to.

Yeah. Oh, and yeah,

Cathy: she has like, I love that story so much because she's like, I loved this team, I loved these people, I loved this time of life, I loved this. And now I take

that skill with me, but I'm gonna use it differently than the path maybe a lot of people envision, which is you gotta keep climbing up up.

And John, this is something I remember from you know, years ago with your first book, will you, even if you don't have the exact stats, will you give us the stats about, you know, the kids go, how many kids go to college and actually play sports? And, you know, how many kids become professional?

I just remember learning from you. Like sometimes we kind of, you know, so many parents say, well, my kid is gonna get to [00:38:00] school on a, you know, a scholarship for their sport, but it's not that common.

John: Oh it's minuscule. I mean, yeah, certainly. And it's different across sports, right? But, you know, maybe 5% of high school athletes might play a college sport, and of that 1% might get a scholarship and less than 1% might get a Division I scholarship.

And you know, and depending on your sport, if it's an international sport, well then it's even smaller because a lot of those spots are taken by international kids as well. So it's like that's gotta be the cherry on top. And, you know, and I look at, like, I had the absolute honor and pleasure of coaching my daughter's group through sort of middle school, which I think is such a hard time for girls.

And this growth. And I spent so much [00:39:00] time managing the dynamics. Of these kids and really talking about all these things we wrote about in the new book here about being a great teammate and what that meant and how you treat people. Because girls at that age can get very cliquey and ostracized people and whatever.

And we fought against it and fought against it. And that team after that, you know, they got, you know, another coach took over the last couple years and she was amazing. But they, they kept that comradery and that friendship. And even during the high school season where these kids went to four different high schools once a month, they'd get together and have dinner as a team and they would do all this stuff together.

And it, it was just awesome. And the coach said to me, she's like, I just, this is like the easiest group I've ever coached. But I don't think that's, it wasn't an accident. No. Like, there, there was a great group of parents [00:40:00] whom I worked hard to shape. Right. And again, they're great people, but it doesn't mean nothing ever happened.

Right. And it was a great group of kids that, you know, we talked about things before they became big problems. And I just think this is the lesson you know, for coaches especially, is like, you know, you don't just go, oh, you're so lucky. What a great parent group. Or, oh, what a great group of kids like.

Some of it's luck and some of it's intentional action, and it's so important that we are intentional about these things, like teaching people to be a great teammate instead of just hoping they're gonna be a good teammate.

Cathy: You know what John, like Todd and I talk a lot about, you know, the way that we interact with people or with our kids or the way that we talk to our kids about it.

When you meet other people who do similar things, it's like you're speaking a similar language. You can talk to each other about things. You can deal with conflict. You can tell the truth and when I'm saying these things, I'm in a compassionate, you know, you're a good [00:41:00] listener, all those kind of things.

But when you're not, when you're with people who do things differently, it's like you literally speak a different language and what you. Did with that team was you taught them how to speak a similar language. So they could trust each other and then they're gonna go through life being like, I know I can, you know, because this is a big thing that, you know, especially on a team, you have to know how to manage conflict with people in a way that you can bring something up, you can share your feelings, you can say when you're disappointed and that person can hear it and you can have an ongoing conversation about it where you can build trust on that.

But a lot of teams, if you don't have that backbone that you gave them, cuz you focused on belonging and, you know, dealing with things upfront, a lot of it basically, You're not speaking the same language is what I'm trying to say. Sometimes it can really be difficult. You talk about that with your in your book about certain teams that, you know, really high profile people who actually learn a certain language and [00:42:00] then inspire that culture within their team versus the person that comes in that's so good and they're just trying to win the game for themselves, and they're not communicating with their team in the same week.

Todd: Well, he tells a story about Kobe and I did Jerry work with Phil? Is that right? Or? Yeah.

John: Yeah. So Jerry his first book was one called Thinking Body Dancing Mind, which became very well known in the sports world 30 years ago, right before there was a lot of sports psychology and stuff out there.

And so it was a book that Phil made all the bowls. Phil Jackson. Yeah. Phil Jackson. Yeah. Made all the bowls, read read and then And then when he went to the Lakers, it was sort of the same thing. And so they've just been connected ever since. And it was awesome actually. Like co two weeks ago, Jerry and I spent 90 minutes on a Zoom with Phil Jackson, who's like an amazing guy.

[00:43:00] And we found him on his ranch in Montana and had a discussion. I mean, we're talk, talking about the same principles that all of us are talking about here today. And he's doing it at a higher level with Michael Jordan or Kobe Bryant or whatever. But the, you know, selfishness, selflessness versus selfishness.

When's the time for each you know, how do I become someone who gives instead of gets, right. How can I give to my team? Humility. Things like that, that I just think oftentimes get missed. And people like Phil Jackson or Steve Kerr, like they, they're very open about this, but I think people just go straight to the wins and losses and they forget they don't pay attention to how much goes on behind the scenes and how much love and trust and respect there is that leads to that championship.[00:44:00]

Todd: Well, and it's funny, you talk about I think it's chapter 13, get Uncomfortable Being uncomfortable, and you tell, there's a story in there about Anson Doran from university of North Carolina Women's Soccer Pro program once encountered Mia Hamm, the reigning player of the year, and already one of the top players in the world training by herself early one morning on a hot, humid summer day.

As he watched, she pushed herself through sprint after sp sprint falling to the ground, ga grasp, gasping for breath after each. It made me think, cuz I remember I was lucky enough to go see a New England Patriots practice during preseason and after the practice was over, everybody went in and this is when Tom Brady was still on the Patriots and he was the last one on the field doing drills.

And I'm like, and this is after he is already won four or five Super Bowls and I'm just like, nobody ever sees it. Nobody ever talks about it. [00:45:00] But that's what. Puts them in their place. We just think that Mia Ham and Tom

Brady and Kobe Bryant and Michael Jordan were just super talented. We showed up that way, right?

Which they were. But there's no way you can be that. And also without that discipline in it. So now how do we shift that lesson into parenting? Like, because it's parenting is freaking hard, as hard as any other sport that anybody's ever played. So I just wonder if you can take that story that you told in the book and shift it into parenting.

John: I mean, that's a great question. I think, I mean, parenting is getting comfortable, being uncomfortable, right? That, that you are constantly in situations where you're like, oh man, you know, this is a tough one. What do I do? I think having. A trusted relationship, [00:46:00] whether you're, you know, still married and with your spouse of, I mean, there's so many things that my wife and I like, okay, like, let's talk about this before we make a decision.

And we're pretty good at saying to our kids let me talk to your mom. Let me talk to your dad. Right? And then of course they try to do the end around, right? And then you're like, Uhuh, like we talk. Yeah. We communicate, right? So, so, you know, what are the things and, you know, what are the things that, like, I'm gonna stake my flag and say this, I will not bend and compromise on versus, versus that.

But I think, you know, you, you give examples of, I, I think sport's cool because we all sort of have some sort of relationship where we understand these things and we understand people and that. People who do things well put in more time than others. Right. Well for me, yeah,

Todd: it's when [00:47:00] I guess I'm answering my own question.

It's like, put in the reps and what the reps is, we're going back to E plus R equals o is, do I have the discipline to not get reactive when are comes in just mad at the world or mad at a friend or mad at me and that's for me. So sweetie, what

Cathy: you, well I wanted to add to this is that something like it, because I'm all, I'm like seeing the frame and I like wanna move the frame over to are kids when they love something and when it comes from like it's an alignment with who they are.

They have more of an ability to give the Mia Ham Tom Brady thing. If we have a child and we say, you are gonna play soccer and I want you to give what Mia Ham gives, our kids may not have that because that's not their dream. Because

I've watched with my own kids where I've been, where they've picked up things and I've been like, oh, this is gonna be so good.

They're gonna love this. Or they have a natural talent for this, and then they just are not putting in what you would think they would. You know, like they, you've got kind of like a road here, take that road, but then they find [00:48:00] something on their own and you see them doing it in their room late at night, or you see them spending two hours, you know, figuring out this little part of it.

And it's because it's coming from inside. So you've already spoke to this, but knowing your kid is such a big, if your dream is for them to do this sport and do it well, it may not look the way you, they may not be Mia Hamm, you know. Well,

John: well, and I think it's important when it, you know, when it comes to sport, most people don't have any inside knowledge of what a Kobe Bryant did, or a Mia Hamm did, or an Abby Wambach did.

They have no idea. And oftentimes we often call things. Talent, which is just ability and the younger our kid is, that ability is so often just completely dependent on when they were born. Yeah. What month of the year? Right? So, the kid who's born in January and [00:49:00] January one's the cutoff for the baseball or the soccer team.

If your kid's born in January, he or she is almost always going to be labeled as more talented than the kid born in November and they're just 11 months older. And it makes a huge difference when they're young and we call this relative age in sport. And so we really don't know. And Tom Brady again is the perfect example, right?

Like I, if arguably the greatest football player of all time at age 23 had 167 teams say, nah, we're not gonna pick him. The idea that we can identify talent at age six or seven or eight, it's absurd, right? And didn't. And so what I'd say is talent is really ability plus these psychological characteristics, you know, like gritty resilience and integrity and all [00:50:00] these things that help get you there.

That's what true talent is. Most people have no idea. And so I think our job as parents really is like I, or my belief is help your kids find their passion instead of trying to determine it for them.

Todd: So I'm gonna jump over to the leadership section, part three and chapter 24. What, Part of what I, the reason I love your book, John, is most of the quotes come from like Maya Angelou and Jon Kabat-Zinn and Father Greatness, it's, you know, you've got some Dean Smith and Phil Jackson in there too.

But it's a lot of the people that Cathy and I kind of emulate, try our best to emulate ourselves after. So I'm just gonna read the two quotes that start with the Learn to Serve chapter and it's from Maya Angelou. When what you're supposed to do when you don't like a thing is change it. If you can't change it, change the way you think about it.

Don't complain. And then Jon Kabat-Zinn says, you can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf. And I'm wondering if you can [00:51:00] just reshare the story cuz Abby Wambach is somebody who Cathy and I were lucky enough to meet cuz she came to one of our conferences. But you have a story in the book about Abby and how she learned to surf.

Would you mind sharing that?

John: This is one of my favorite stories in the book because it epitomizes I think so much, and then there's so much to learn. And so the story is obviously for any of your listeners who don't know, Abby Womack's, one of the greatest female players of all time, multiple time World Player of the Year, world Cup Olympic champion.

I mean, the accolades go on and on. But in 2019, US women are in the World Cup. 2019. No, 2015. Yeah, 2015. They're in the World Cup. The coach of the team pulls Abby aside, says, you're no longer gonna start, right. You're gonna come off the bench. And as Abby talks about, like she was just heartbroken, absolutely [00:52:00] devastated.

Like, this is it. This is the final event of my career. I'm gonna retire after. Now I'm on the bench. I've never been on the bench my entire life. I'm the world player of the year. I'm this, I'm that. And she said she was so angry and mad and crying and upset and calling her loved ones and all that.

And then she said, you know, I, and then I sort of thought about it and like, this moment right here is gonna define my career, how I respond, not react. I'm reacting now, which is okay, I'm reacting privately, but how I respond to this is going to be what I'm remembered for. And she decided to respond by being an amazing teammate and coming off the bench and supporting those on the field.

Right. And I mean, I think she talks about how Jill Ellis was like, I gotta sub you in cuz you're annoying the heck outta me right now, like, yelling in my ear. But you know, and she and she talks about how like so many of her teammates [00:53:00] that are close from that team, remember that was a defining moment for them too, right?

If the best player ever arguably. You know, can react to or respond to getting benched this way. How can I do things differently? And I just think it's just an amazing story because that's the lesson, right? That we need to all teach our kids, right? So, okay, you're on the bench now, what? You're gonna become petulant and selfish and cut the legs out from the coach and the team.

And as the parent, are you gonna intervene or whatever? Or are you gonna say, you know, what did Abby do in this situation? She became a great teammate, you know? And yeah. So I absolutely love that story. And I know that Abby looks at that as like, that was one of the defining moments of her life.

Right there.

Todd: So, I think we maybe have 15 minutes left and I got a bunch of questions I [00:54:00] still wanna ask, but I wanna make sure sweetie, that you get your chance to ask anything or I can keep going.

Cathy: No, I just wanted to add to that story cuz I love that story too and I think, you know, I've heard Abby tell that story and what I love about it, which you also shared, John, was that she was upset.

Initially, and she said she went to the locker room and was throwing things around and was pissed off. Yeah. But then, like you said, she called people. She d you know, she, it's not about not having the emotion. It's about what you're gonna do next. And that's like, I think, and I'm, and this is a parenting thing, sometimes we see our kid react in a certain way.

They get angry, they get sad. And for us to say, don't be sad, or don't be angry to shut that down, versus, I get it. And then as then helping them understand wh how to, you know, that's what, that's the whole thing about being emotionally agile is what are you gonna do with that energy? You are angry, but how are you gonna use it?

How are you gonna use it?

John: And if you weren't angry, you. There'd be something wrong with you, right? Yeah. Right. Like it means [00:55:00] you care. Yeah. Congratulations, welcome to being human. Like you, you care, you're nervous, you're stressed, you're angry. You just wanna do something fantastic. But it doesn't mean that, you know, but then what I do in that moment, I can go the road diverges and I can go in two different directions and one's gonna be helpful and one's not.

Todd: Yep. That's it. Well, that's what I've been saying forever and I'm good at preaching it. I'm probably not that good at practicing it all emotions. Are good if channeled in a positive way. Some people call positive and negative emotions. They don't subscribe to that. There's uncom, there's comfortable and uncomfortable emotions.

And when my kid shows up after a long day with uncomfortable emotions, it tends to bring uncomfortable emotions up to me. But my hope is that I can hold the space for whatever it hap, whatever happens to be bubbling up in their system and not shut it down. It's so easy for us parents to try to shut it down and it's got nothing to do with them.

It's just cuz I don't feel like Feeling this [00:56:00] right now. So instead of me dealing with my reaction to this, I'm just gonna shut yours down so I can go on with my business

Cathy: as usual. Well, and then that thing, you know, and this is kind of an obvious thing, but then everything that Abby felt she used on that bench, embarrassment, you know, rage, you know, disappointment, whatever.

Sadness. That's what allowed her to scream and yell and say, come on, I got you. Like, she chose the love path, but it was all that energy she was releasing, you know, was from those initial Yeah. Foundational emotions, which were, this is, you know, cuz she said it was embarrassing, it was all these things, but use it.

That's, you know, so anyway, thank you John for using that, putting that in your book. Cause I think that's a powerful one.

Todd: Chapter 19, Sweep the Shed. Quick story. I went to go see the All Blacks play the US Rugby team at Soldier Field one time, and like, I don't know, four minutes in the game.

It was seven to six. I'm like, I might be getting the scoring wrong. I don't know how rugby scores, but I'm like, oh, we're [00:57:00] in this. And then we lost like 97 to six. That's, that gives you a quick example of how good the All Blacks

are at rugby, and I'm wondering why you put them in the Sweeping the Shed chapter.

What do they do?

John: Sweep The Shed is sort of, a mantra of the All Blacks. There's a wonderful book called Legacy by a guy named James Kerr about sort of the culture of the All Blacks. And, you know, the, all Blacks in the era of professional sports are the winningest team, right? The highest winning percentage.

And the, this culture was really based on a lot of things. Number one, you don't own the shirt, you're just in a custodian of it for a while, and you need to leave it in a better place for the next guy who comes after you. And number two, the idea that I, in order to be great, you have to be humble.

You can never be too [00:58:00] big to do all the little things. And so the way that the All Blacks remind themselves of that is that after every game they play, the coaches are done, the media's gone. The 80,000 fans leave Soldier Field, the All Blacks players sweep the locker room. So they clean up the dirt and the mud and the tape and everything, and they leave the locker room better than they got it.

Right? And that's not like, oh, hey, brand new player, here's the broom. That's the team captain picks it up first. Right? And I absolutely love. That idea. And when I walk into a college locker room oftentimes, and I look around, right? If it's an absolute pigsty, I'm like, and what other details are you missing?

Right? What else are we missing here? Right? What are the other things that you can't be bothered to do [00:59:00] that you might get away with some days, but when it comes down to the finest margins of winning a championship, you haven't done them. And I can just see it in your locker room. And so I think that it's such a, you know, important thing.

I, I was working with Rutgers Field Hockey and In 2021, we ended up being the number one team in the country. We won the Big 10. It was the first Rutgers team to ever win a Big 10 championship. And people are like, how'd you know you were there that year? And I was like, you know, I was there in preseason and we had a team meal and I was sitting with the coaches and the head strength coach for the school.

And at, we were in the student athletic center and at the end of the meal, the kids got up, no one asked them to, they cleaned up, they wiped down the tables, they boxed up the food, they made a box of food for the strength coach to bring home to his kids. They tucked in the chairs and said, we'll see a practice tomorrow.[01:00:00]

And the coach looked at sort of us and goes, I've been here 25 years, I've never seen a team do that before. Right. They just expect someone to pick up after them. Right. And I was like, yeah, that's it. We're there. Right. We're there. And I talked to that to my kids. And again, it's led by a coach as well.

Like if I see a piece of tape on the ground or an empty plastic bottle, I might say to a kid, Hey you're that. Can you make sure you, we clean up before we leave? But I can't just kick it outta the way and walk away. Like I gotta pick it up too. Yeah. And I think if you model that, you're great.

Todd: Yeah. I was gonna say, modeling is the number one way that I choose, that I try my best to parent is by modeling the behavior I wanna see in the kids.

So, and the reason I love those stories is cuz entitlement there. I think I still have some of my own work to do around entitlement because entitlement drives me up a wall and the two stories you just shared are the opposite of that. And I just so am [01:01:00] inspired by that. And I just know because I get so grumpy around what I perceive to be entitlement that there's still some entitle me that I need to kind of figure out and process through.

So I just love those two stories. The last thing I wanna share, And I think it can relate to parenting really well as a chapter on Pet The Dragons. Can you explain what that means? And then I'll kind of ask a parent I'll just, I guess, make a parenting comment around it. What is Pet The Dragons?

John: Well, for those all the parents who listen to your podcast, there's a great children's book called, there's no Such Thing as a dragon. Jack Kent, I think is the author. And it's a simple story about a little kid who wakes up in the morning and sees this cute little dragon and he pets the dragon.

And then he goes downstairs and he tells his mom and she says, there's no such thing as a dragon. And next thing you know, the dragon gets a little bigger and throughout the day The [01:02:00] mom, and then eventually the dad keeps saying there's no such thing as a dragon. And every time they do, the dragon gets bigger and then it eventually takes over the house and runs away with the house.

And at the very end they finally acknow. You know, little Billy's like, but there is a dragon. And the parents acknowledge it and the dragon gets small and cute again. Right? And I think, you know, when we look at most of the children's stories that we read to our kids, there's a lot of valuable life lessons in there.

And that one is that when you don't acknowledge small things, they become big things in your marriage, in your relationships, on your team, whatever it is. And so I love that story. And it's funny to walk into like a division one locker room and read and pull out a kid's book, and they're like, who the heck is this guy?

And read that. But people get it. And every locker room, every family has dragons. And [01:03:00] if you acknowledge them and talk to them and deal with it and you know it's going to be difficult and there might be tears, but if we stick our head in the sand, it's not going away. And so it's funny cuz a couple of these teams, like, you know, I, like I will buy them like a little stuff dragon and just sits in the locker room.

Right. And I'll come in and be like, all right, does anyone, have we been penting the dragon? Right? Or is this thing ripping the locker room apart right now? And it's just a great metaphor for sport and teams and life and Yeah. And it's a cute story too.

Todd: It is, sweetie. What do you think of that?

Cathy: I, well, I love it. I mean, that is and I wrote it down because I obviously am going to, and I'm gonna give you full credit and I'm gonna give the book full credit, but this is what I talk to families about all the time when it comes to, I, you talk about messy conversations with girls and as they're growing up, and obviously it's not gender specific, but [01:04:00] just because I'm always talking about the specific things they're dealing with.

But that you have confronting, like allowing when they say there's something to say, you see it too, and that you are there with them and that we're gonna talk about it. We're not gonna put it in a corner. And that we're gonna ask questions and then we're gonna listen, like all the willingness to keep that dragon.

Cute and small, rather than it becomes so big that we can no longer even see each other anymore. You know? It devours us cuz there's like a, it, it goes so far the other way.

Todd: Well, for me it's just like, I mean, whether it's a family or an intimate relationship, like if we're not dealing with this stuff, it's not going away.

It's not going away. I know. And I just, I've never heard that. I've never heard of that children's book, but I love it and it's such a wonderful reminder of how to be in relationship with anybody and pet petting the dragon.

Cathy: Especially when you're talking to teams about 'em, that's what brings them closer.

Like, this is the thing about that people don't understand about conflict is the [01:05:00] word. It's almost like we have to come up with a new word. Because that's what actually brings us closer, but we avoid it or we don't talk about it, so we get further away. So it's like this paradoxical thing where it's uncomfortable, but that's the way we actually create intimacy and connection.

And you use this word in your book a lot belonging. You know? Can I bring my whole self here? You know, that's I have like, I like have so many chapters from your book. Just like, you know, I'm like rereading them because do, can I bring my whole self here or am I being, you know, all these aspects of who I am.

So I just love Yeah. Ideas. So do, will you say something about belonging really quick?

John: Yeah, sure. And I think, you know, the way we wrote the book is, as you guys have seen, right? They're short, they're like three page chapters, right? And the idea behind that is you know, we want, it was written for high school teams and college teams and middle school teams and stuff.

It was written for the parent who says like, [01:06:00] You know what? Let me get this book for my kid because I want my son or daughter to be a better teammate. And but it was also written for the coach who says, I need 20. We're gonna read this as a team, right? We need to do this. And, or maybe we'll just do a chapter a week, right?

And we'll spend 15 minutes one day a week, and we'll go through it. And at the end of each you know, short chapter we call it, we have this section called Optimize Your Performance. And it's a place to write in the book and write your answers down and then discuss as a team so that when these dragons come up, like you have a discussion about 'em and you know, what do you need to start doing?

What do you need to stop doing? What do we need to keep doing, you know, to be better in, in these areas? And not every team. Needs the same thing. Right? And when you do that, right, when you have those discussions, when every,

when people have a voice, when you get to speak up, when you acknowledge what's wrong you have what, you know, we [01:07:00] call psychological safety.

Yeah. Right? That and then psychological safety is the, what Research shows is the key to high performing teams that people can speak up. They're not shut down, they're not embarrassed, they're not humiliated. And I think when you have high levels of psychological safety, you have high levels of belonging, you have high levels of people feeling like, this is a group that I want to be a part of.

We don't see everything eye to eye, but we can disagree respectfully. And we can agree to pursue a thing even if it's not my favorite path of action because the group thinks this and my ideas matter. You know, I think one of the most. Important topics we teach in there that we didn't really cover.

Here. It's an acronym and we call it the river, right? And the river being, when you make people feel relevant, when you make them feel important, when you [01:08:00] validate them, when you empower them, and when you respect them, you get their very best. And teams with belonging do that. Great coaches do that.

Great parents do that. That even when I'm disagreeing or saying no, I can still do it with respect. I can still give you a voice. I can still validate your opinion and make you feel important and relevant. And you know, when you do that, you, you build that trust and that connection, and that's when people perform their best.

Todd: I think that's a great way to, great place to stop. John, if anybody's out there and neither wants to buy your book or listen to your podcast just go ahead and promote anything you want to.

John: Yeah, the books on Amazon right now, it's out in hardcover. We decided to self-publish this one so we could, you know, do bulk orders cheaper and get 'em to coaches cheaper.

It'll be in it'll be on all platforms here at the end of August when we release [01:09:00] paperback version. My website's changing the game project.com and that's kind of the mothership where you can find the Wave of Champions podcast and our blogs and videos and my TED talk and all that other fun stuff.

So that's a great way to sort of, connect. And if you like this, I mean, you can reach out to me, John j o h n, at changingthegameproject.com. Is a great way to

sort of, you know, if you have any questions or whatever and say, Hey, heard you on. The, you know, Todd and Cathy's podcast like, awesome. It'd be great to hear from you.

Sweet. All right, sweetie, any closing

Todd: thoughts?

Cathy: No, just that I love your books, John, and I love your work. And you know, like, like we said at the beginning, a lot of what we learned from you years and years ago, we still use, and I always direct people to your work. So thank you for doing what you do in the world, and it's making a big difference.

Todd: All right, I'll see. We will see you on next week's episode of Zen Parenting [01:10:00] Radio. Where's my outro music? Oh, I forgot to play a funny clip, but it's all right. We'll do the, oh boy. It was Alan Iversson. I'll play it anyways. Practice. We'll

John: talk about, we talking about practice. Not a game. Not a game.

We talking about practice. Practice, man, I mean, how silly is that?

Cathy: Yikes. So it's so famous because Yeah, that's what it is all about. Is that what he's saying? Is that,

Todd: no, he, you wanna give the context around that, John? Do you remember the context?

John: I mean I don't remember exactly what what was happening it that brought that up except I think he got suspended for skipping practice or behavior and practice and he was just basically trying to say, tell the world practice doesn't matter.

And obviously Alan Iversson was the supremely talented basketball player who probably wasn't as good as he could have been if he was maybe a little more serious about practice. [01:11:00] Boom.

Cathy: Interesting. Interesting. Oh, I love ending on that. That's great.

Todd: Okay, now I gotta go back to my outro music. All right.

John O' Sullivan, you are awesome. Thank you so much. We'll definitely connect again Zen Parenting Radio listeners, thanks for joining us. See you next week.