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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 725. Why listen to Zen Parenting Radio because you'll feel outstanding. Now, always remember our motto, which is the best predictor of a child's wellbeing is a parent's self understanding.

On today's show, we're gonna talk a little bit about anticipatory grief. Probably we have two ask us

Cathy: and. Highly sensitive people

Todd: and maybe some highly sensitive people discussion. We have, and we have to ask us anything, so if you don't know what ask us anything is we have this link. You can actually scroll down in your show notes and you can ask us anything and we may or may not be able to answer, but you could either type it or you can just talk into your phone and we'll get an email saying, Hey.

[00:01:00]

Cathy: They have a question and we're gonna try our best to answer. So that's on the agenda for today. Your hat's a little off. Why? Why is it a little off?

Todd: Well, first of all, people who are listening to this don't know what you're talking about. It's just like, it's like you put it on wrong, but if you wanna see my hat, You have to go to our YouTube page and our goal is to get above a hundred subscribers.

We had to start over with YouTube.

Cathy: We had to start over. We lost our, we, what'd we lose our, our

Todd: password? I don't know. We lost something. So we started over, but now our guy Brad, puts on these clips, the full shows on Zoom, I'm sorry, on YouTube, but then even these like little clips. So it was really good.

That's actually good. So. Once again, scroll down your show notes and subscribe to Zen Parenting Radio and see Todd's hat. I'm wearing my Denali hat 'cause I climbed Mount Denali this summer. You did not? No, I did not. I took an airplane and landed on a glacier at Mount Denal yes. So, I'm excited for this podcast and, [00:02:00] we are, but first you have a Zen Parenting moment

the name of that moment, if you can bear with me one second. It's called, when I Was Your age. When I

Cathy: was Your age. And it was, it was, are you gonna play this song? I think I am. I've used this lyric before, by the way. I know for other Zen Parenting moments, but it was too perfect for this one to

Todd: not use.

I just don't know if this is the right spot of the song.

Cathy: I'm much too fast to take that test

Todd: that, that hard, different, waiting for.

Cathy: I'm not, it's further in here. I'll just say it to 'em. Hold on.

Todd: Every time saw had it made, it seemed the taste was not so sweet. Is this good, sweetie?

Cathy: This is not the lyric from the Zen Parenting moment at all.

I know it's [00:03:00] later.

Todd: He's He's talking a lot.

Cathy: I know, but like, just pause for a second. Hold on real quick.

What I'm trying to tell you is it's in a different part. It's in a different verse, and you keep playing the same section. Yeah, it's, it's not the first verse. It's in the second verse. So it, it goes verse, chorus, verse. I'm gonna find it here. Are you, so I'll talk about it while you look for it.

Um. I wrote a, I wrote a Zen Parenting moment called, When I Was Your Age.

Be. You Did. Seems insane. Here we go. And these children that try to change their worlds are

quite aware.[00:04:00]

Todd: And you know, you know what I think about what, when I heard the song, the Breakfast Club. The Breakfast Club, that's interesting. Back in the eighties when we heard this, we were the kids and we're like, yeah, David Bowie way to speak our language against us. And now that we're old, we have to relearn the very thing that we believed in when we were younger.

We've become the principal. We've been, we've become. The antagonist of this song. Isn't that weird?

Cathy: Well, and I think that's what the Zen Parenting moment was about, is we're really not the antagonist, but whenever we're trying to relate to our kids, only from our own personal experience by saying, when I was your age, here's what I did, or when, when I was your age, here's how I felt.

It's not that our viewpoint is not important or valued, it's that it's often not. Comparable or it's non. [00:05:00] What's the word I'm looking for? It's kind of irrelevant. Like, it could be interesting in that how you handled things, but what our kids are going through are not the same things that we went through.

There are some things we can relate to. We can relate to the basics of someone hurt my feelings, someone broke my heart. And we can talk about how that feels, but to impose our value system from our time and be like, here's what I did. They live in a world with social media and you know, everything's changing at a quick pace.

Everything's technological, the cultural demands, the social pressures, the climate change, the gun violence. Like it's different. And it doesn't mean that we don't say anything, it just means that we acknowledge that. So if we start every conversation with. When I was your age, what I wrote is, our kids know we're not talking about them, we're talking about us.

Right. And so, you know, what do we say instead? We'll say, you know, I [00:06:00] remember similar experiences growing up, but tell me about yours. We stay available to their experience rather than make it apples to apples. 'cause it's apples to oranges. That's right.

Todd: So, Millie was on last week. Millie, our friend, talk

Cathy: when we were talking about anxiety

Todd: and I asked her if she would give a testimonial, which she did. A what on a podcast? A testimonial? Testimonial. A testimonial, which she did on the

podcast last week. She did, but she felt like she got caught a little off guard because that's what I did. I called her up

Cathy: because we told her six minutes before she came downstairs, she was gonna do a podcast with us, and she

Todd: totally rolled with it in the best way she did.

So, but anyways, so Millie, who is sometimes a perfectionist wanted a second chance Oh, of giving a testimonial. That's so sweet. Now it's a little too long to play on this entire podcast, so I'm clipping it into smaller pieces and maybe we'll play a little bit of Millie over the next few weeks. But this is just a quick testimonial that if she had had a little more time to prepare then this is what she would've [00:07:00] said. And this is about Team Zen. This is about Team Zen, which is our 25 bucks a month subscriber. 'cause you and I get,

Cathy: I gave you a new way to describe it. Do you remember? Oh, I do have that. Hold on. Lemme see. Yeah, because I don't think the whole \$25 a month thing is appealing.

Todd: Join the Circle, which is the Team Zen membership platform. It's an app with Zen Parenting Radio's complete parenting content collection, plus live talks all in one place. That's it. That's what? That's it. And then here's Millie with 30 seconds on her experience of Team Zen, the podcast.

Cathy: So when you created this Team Zen group, well, of course I knew that I'd love the community, but why do I love this community?

Well, it's because you guys have created a super safe and welcoming space for us. One. Where we can feel vulnerable to share things that we might not feel comfortable sharing elsewhere. And some of my favorite moments have been when team members. Or I, shared something super vulnerable and authentic [00:08:00] because you only feel closer to them afterwards.

Right? So anyway, that's the reason why community was my first answer. And then second,

Todd: I we're gonna have to wait for the second for next week.

Cathy: Oh, that's nice. I agree with her. We do, people do share things they're going through and 99% of the time people are like afterwards are like, me too.

Todd: Yeah.

It's very well. And, it's the opposite. Like, I don't think I'd be very, I share plenty of stuff on circle that I would never share on her Instagram or Facebook page. Or on this podcast. Or on this podcast. But it is a little more, I dunno if sacred's the best description. Intimate, but yeah, it's a little more intimate.

So anyways, if you're interested, 25 bucks, cancel at any time. Hope to see you. Alright, so do we wanna start with the Ask Us Anything questions.

Cathy: Do one Ask Us Anything. Because I think there was someone who wrote to us a long time ago that we haven't answered.

Todd: I'm just gonna go with this 'cause I have two written down.

I don't know which one came first. Hi Cathy and Todd, big fan, blah, blah, blah. [00:09:00] Thank you for being a big fan, by the way, question. I am a mom of a five-year-old daughter who is about to begin kindergarten at a public school. She attended preschool at a Montessori and had a wonderful learning experience.

Upon entering her new school, we received a lengthy email on classroom slash school expectations, rules, et cetera. One of the portions included behavior charts. I personally have an issue with behavior charts and the emphasizing of extrinsic reward slash punishment. I read it. And I felt gut punched.

I know in my heart my daughter is going to thrive and have hard life experiences wherever she ends up. However, my question for you is, since I'm freaking out on the inside, how do we walk that line of modeling and supporting a heart-centered philosophy with our children, while also placing them into school environment that reinforces extr extrinsic reward slash punishment?

Did you face this when making the choice for your children to go to [00:10:00] school? It feels more common in my friend circle today that people are thinking about homeschooling or alternative options. I feel a little lost in the noise and emotional about it all. Just love to hear your input on any of these, on any or all of this. I appreciate you both.

Cathy: Yeah, I mean, definitely I think that we have a way that we talk to the girls at home and the expectations and the way they're set. And then you go into a school environment, or maybe a sports environment and it's not the same. They have different ways of encouraging or managing, or whatever word we

wanna use, sometimes disciplining kids. And I think that the way that you described it is exactly how we talk to our kids about it. Now, there's a lot of different ways to talk about this because Todd and I wanted our girls to go to a public school. So part of that deal is that this is, you're gonna have a different teacher every year.

They're gonna have a different way of being with you. [00:11:00] Some are gonna be really good fits, some may be a little harder to understand. And that's kind of part of it like. I do understand the trend toward different schools, you know, with different, expectations. You know, if it'd be something that's been around forever, like Montessori or, or Waldorf or a more of a homeschooling experience, I do get it.

and for some kids that is ideal. So like I have no problem with that. The big but is there will be times in life when you have to be in experiences that aren't perfect fits, and how do you manage that with support and with the ability to get the majority of your needs met. It's not about going into a situation and having it be toxic and you being treated poorly.

That's the extreme, but, When you go into a classroom and you are used to a preschool teacher that's really warm, fuzzy, touchy feely, maybe like, gives you hugs, and then you go into maybe a kindergarten that has more of a regimented teacher, [00:12:00] how do you help your kid understand that? And that's the communication at home is it's never about putting that teacher down and saying they're doing it wrong and we do it right, but explaining the, there are different.

Ways that teachers and bosses and coaches manage. And what you have to understand is how to best, how to do your best within that situation. And there have been times where the girls have come home and told us a story and we're like, yeah, that wasn't fair. And how are we gonna manage that? Is this something that's been so bad that we need to talk, call the teacher?

Or is this something that we say, yeah, that was hard for you and that didn't seem fair, like this is, we can't. Overly organize how our kids' lives are going to be on a daily basis. We can do our best at home to make it be a good fit for them, and then do our best to understand that when they go out in the world, it's not always a perfect fit.

But you know, like I'm just thinking about like behavioral charts. Like I can totally hear you and I Todd saying to the girls like, [00:13:00] yeah, this is, this is how you have to manage that classroom because she has 30 kids in the class

and she's trying to, you know, inspire kids to do this or that, but. It doesn't mean we're gonna do that at home.

We're not gonna start behavior charts at home.

Todd: I feel like it's an opportunity. So first of all, the, her daughter, is five, right? She starting school. So it's kind of hard to be like, Hey, daughter, what would you like? Like they're too young. So it's almost like our parental values Correct. Are the overriding decisionmaking when they get into fifth grade, sixth grade, or whatever age is appropriate.

That's when you start bringing them into the decision. But when they're four or five, like whatever, they're still trying to.

Cathy: Well, and I think that's her point is my parenting values have been this, and now I'm putting my kid in an environment where it's different. So should I be doing this?

Todd: Right. And I think we can't, tell this person and nor are we trying to, I would just, you know, if I were talking to this woman, I would say, how important is it, to, to your point, we wanted our kids to go to a public school. Right. For a lot of different reasons. So we were will willing to [00:14:00] compromise some of the baggage that comes with being in that system. Yes. Good way to say it. If she's like, this isn't working for me at all, then it sounds like you're done. This is not the best decision. So it's a, You just have to figure out what is most important to you and your partner, and then adjust as you go. It reminds me of Rob Bell, who spoke at our conference one time and he moved, you know, I think his son was like in eighth grade, and he realized this is not a good fit for my son.

So he like pulled him out and moved him into a completely different like expansive, open classroom schooling system.

Cathy: We've had so many friends who have moved their kids from high schools, middle schools like it. It's so typical. It's not, and the fact that we have so many options is wonderful. Yeah, it's, that's why I was trying to say at the beginning, for some kids, the, these different schools and what they offer is perfect, you know, art schools and you know, there I have a friend whose son goes to a school that focuses on [00:15:00] hockey. You know, half of the day, like, there's all different options. I think my point is, is that maybe if you're already there and you're like, I'd like to give public school a try, see how she does.

Because some kids thrive in that environment. Some kids really like the structure and the consistency and you can talk to her about the behavior charts, like you're not doing it at home, where if she does A, B and C, she gets a piece of candy. So that's not, and that's not what teachers are doing, but I'm saying she's not getting that everywhere.

That's just an experience she's having in the classroom that she can maybe associate with that class and that age. It's just a, it's different now if she gets in there. You're finding that it's threatening her learning or she's, you know, having significant issues. Talk to the school, talk to the social worker.

Consider other possibilities. I think what we have to remember, and I even said this to my girls, going away to college, nothing's set in stone, right? Like we go out in the world and we try things and sometimes we follow a pretty typical pattern. And sometimes that [00:16:00] pattern needs to be shifted for whatever reason.

And that's and then also if your kid is like, yeah, I kinda like this system because it makes me feel safe, or it makes me know what's expected of me, then that's good too. There's no good or bad. This is all gray. And it's a great question though. I, you know, the big answer to your question is Todd and I dealt with that? Absolutely.

Is do we do things at home the way that the girls have learned in the classroom?
Not really.

Todd: No. And that's yeah, that's hey, because eventually our kids are gonna have to deal with some system that correct. We don't agree with. So it just depends if you want to introduce that when they're five or when they're, or they're 13 or whatever.

So my next, I'm gonna read this next question. And I'm not sure if the dots connect, so Cathy, you're gonna have to try to maybe help me out with that. Because what I wanna talk about, because I am owning my own ignorance about HSPs, highly sensitive people, okay? So, The question that I'm about to ask may not even be [00:17:00] about that, but I'm hoping that I was on a father-daughter weekend this weekend, and there's a few dads that asked me for resources, because they knew I podcasted, on highly sensitive people because they think their children may be identified as that label or whatever.

But let me first ask the question that the listener asks, and then I'm just going to give a Google definition of what an HSP is.

Hi Todd and Cathy. My husband and I have been trying our best to provide our daughter support since she was like three years old. She explodes so easily, especially when she does not get what she wants. She forgets requests or directions. She tested negative by far for ADHD. She screams to the whole family, including her four year old brother. Lately, she has a hard time taking responsibility and a bit of lying. We've been going to counseling for a year with no huge improvement. I'm scared. I'm a scared mom. Wondering if they will ask forever.

Cathy: You know, we've done [00:18:00] this question before. We have. When? I don't know, but I know that we've,

Todd: Is it possible we did it on Team Zen?

Cathy: Maybe, but it sounds really familiar 'cause I remember the whole thing.

Todd: Let me just finish with the question. Then we'll go to HSP and we'll go on.

Yeah, we'll go on. A scared mom wondering if they'll last forever, especially as teenage teen years will be here before we know it, scream time is a trigger.
Screen

Cathy: time or scream? She says Scream time. Scream

Todd: time. Is a trigger. And while we set limits, oh, I think she meant to say scream.

While we set time limits and boundaries that become another fight, it's like there's not a win for anyone and we are constantly trying to acquire more balance and less confrontation. We have read books, attended positive parenting solutions, counseling, and nothing seems to work. Thanks. So let me just kind of blend this in with a few of my, I was in a father-daughter weekend. There was some dads that were really struggling with their daughters. But they were younger. They were between the ages of like five and eight. Elementary school, elementary school, and they [00:19:00] were struggling. They were like, I think my kid, is a highly sensitive person asked me for some, resources. I actually ended up looking, 'cause one thing that's nice about Team Zen Circle is you can just type that in and all the blogs and all the podcasts and all the Zen Talks all come parent content all in one place. All in one place. But I asked ChatGPT what an HSP is.

ChatGPT says it refers because I need help understanding what an HSP is. It refers to an individual who possesses a heightened sensitivity and responsiveness to various stimuli including emotional, environmental, and sensory stimuli. HSPs tend to process and experience sensory information, emotions, and external, external stimuli more deeply and more intensely than the average person.

This heightened sensitive sensitivity can manifest in several ways, emotional sensitivity, sensory sensitivity. [00:20:00] Empathy and intuition. Depth of processing and overstimulation. And many, many other ways. And maybe there's many, many, many other ways. So, 'cause when I, for when you and I were talking about it, I think one of the things you said is like, you know, you thought about like the tags on the back of our shirts.

That's not what, or, or the socks, you know, sometimes our, our kids didn't like the regular socks 'cause there's a little seam in them. So we got seamless socks when they're like four years old. Diabetic socks. Diabetic socks. My buddies were not talking about that. They were talking about emotions.

Highly volatile emotional response. 'Cause they see all these other kids who are not responding the same way. And they see their own. Who's responding much differently? Would those kids possibly be categorized as HSPs?

Cathy: Possibly. But it just, it just depends on why, because the thing about that we have to remember about kids' behavior is it's all communication.

I mean, regardless of diagnosis or label, it's all [00:21:00] communication. And what I mean is that there are some kids that are gonna communicate more frequently, more loudly or maybe shut down more. And that's there be, and that could be because of something that. You know, there's a neurodiversity or there's an anxiety that they're experiencing that they, they're reacting this way, but they're still communicating to us their needs.

And I think that the, the whole idea of, I am a highly sensitive person and I was, when I was little, I didn't have that language. And I have. Learned through, my experience on Earth about how to manage that and I still struggle with it.

Todd: Is HSP like a diagnosis that you get from a doctor or no?

Cathy: It can be. Elaine Aaron wrote a book called Highly Sensitive People a while ago. You know, it's been out for a while, so it's in the ethers and it's definitely something that therapists talk about. But it's a big umbrella. Like, it's

not like you're highly sensitive. You're not, you're, because you can be sensitive in certain areas and not in others.

[00:22:00] But there are people, it's kind of like, you know, it falls in this weird world of are you an empath? and I, and people self, and I don't even wanna say self-diagnose. They self label these things. And the reason that I am saying it, so. Literally, like I am a highly sensitive person is I check the majority of these boxes.

This is not like I have heightened sensitivity perception. I wear my sunglasses when there's clouds out. I wear them when it's raining. There are rooms that are too bright for me. There are sounds that are too loud for me. I could be in this room and smell something in the other room.

I can feel people's feelings, very deeply, which is have been a challenge. And so I just consider it having a much thinner veil on the world. Like I'm a little more of a raw. Nerve and the way that in my life I have communicated that when I was a kid I was [00:23:00] intensely shy. And or, you know, and again, that's how it showed up as behavior.

And then I learned how to, kind of be on. Then go home and like decompress. You know? That's why I totally understand when kids come home from school, how they like let it all out. Because I would do the whole extroverted thing and I got really good at it, or I'd chameleon. So whoever I was with, I would make them feel good because I was feeling what they were feeling.

And you know, one of, I sent Todd this really funny, TikTok made him laugh because it was this woman saying, you know, highly sensitive people be like, and the four things were her walking on the floor and picking things off her feet because she didn't like things on her feet. When I was a kid, I used to literally not be able to walk on sand in the beach because it drove me crazy and I would walk on a towel.

You can imagine how annoying that was to your family when you're at the beach. Yeah, like I wouldn't walk on the sand. I probably vacuum the floor. [00:24:00] What, twice a week? Because I don't like things on my feet. It's got nothing to do with cleanliness. The second one was wearing your sunglasses all the time, which I do all the time.

You know, going outside. The third one was smells and the fourth one was cold temperature. I vacillate between hot and cold a lot.

Todd: I wanna see how many of these boxes you check. Go ahead. Number one, emo and then I'll read the definition. Emotional sensitivity. HSPs often experience emotions more intensely, both positive and, I wanna invite our, our listeners that if they have somebody in their life that they think might be, think about it through that lens.

Okay? Emotional sensitivity. HSPs often experience emotions more intensely, both positive and negative. They might feel deeply affected by others' moods, empathize strongly and be more prone to feelings of anxiety or overwhelm. So if you had to say yes or no to that one sweetie, what would you say? I would say yes.

And what would you say about me? No, I don't think you're as affected. Totally agree number. So [00:25:00] that's box one check. Box two, sensory sensitivities. HSPs are more attuned to sensory experiences such as textures, sounds, smells, and visual stimuli. They might be easily overwhelmed by bright lights, loud noises, or strong scents. Oh that's like my life. That would be a yes. And a no for me. I didn't know for you.

Cathy: Number three. You need to learn how to smell more things. No,

Todd: I don't. I smell pizza and french fries. That's fine. We'll walk,

Cathy: walk somewhere and I'll be like, the smell is so bad. And you're like, I don't smell anything.

Todd: Number three, empathy and intuition. This is an interesting one 'cause I would, I'm, by the way, I'm totally okay with not being either the first two, but now all of a sudden, Ooh, intuition. Like, I would like to have that. Let's see. Empathy and intuition. HSPs tend to have a strong capacity for empathy and intuition.

They can pick up on subtle emotional cues from others and have a keen awareness of the emotions and needs of those around them. That's a double check for sweetie. You [00:26:00] should put two checks in that one for you. Yes. And I would say no for me. I do, I have intuition, yes. But I think every person has intuition.

But through this lens, I would say no.

Cathy: You don't pick up on subtle cues that people are dropping. Right. Like sometimes I think in a conversation I can kind of notice. By someone's body

language or the way they answered a question, what the appropriate question should be next, or maybe lack of question.

And I think sometimes you would just ask the question you wanna ask and you wouldn't pick up on, maybe the girls are not up for that. Got it.

Todd: So you're three for three. Number four, depth of processing. HSPs tend to process information deeply and thoroughly. They may take longer to make a decision because they carefully consider all aspects of a situation before reaching a conclusion.

Cathy: Well, I think this is an interesting one for me because as far as thinking deeply about something, oh my gosh, like I'll take something to the end, but I also, another part of my sensitivity is I actually have, [00:27:00] I make very emotional decisions. Meaning like if I was choosing an Airbnb or a shirt or when you and I were choosing homes, I can walk in and feel if it's right for sure.

I don't really quickly, really quickly, so I don't, doesn't take me long. Make decision. You don't have paralysis by analysis. I don't. So I think some people would say, oh, you know, a highly sense a person gets really stuck. I do not, but it's, it's connected to the same thing that I, but I do. If, if I've watched a movie, I don't just get the surface of the movie, I wanna talk about every layer of the movie. Yes. But I do not take a long time to make decisions.

Todd: Right. So maybe that's a half check. Or maybe not checked at all.

Cathy: Or it would be another part of being a, a highly sensitive person is strong intuition. Is that I can walk into a house and go, no, yeah, no, I can look at pictures of four Airbnbs and go, that's not right. And someone could challenge me [00:28:00] on that, like when I'm saying that to you guys. To everyone. I'm not saying I'm right that you're wrong and I'm right. I'm saying this is how I feel and I go with it.

Todd: Yeah, that's what I mean. Last one. And I don't know if this is the best. I don't know how important this one is, but I'll say it anyways, overstimulation.

Because HSPs are more sensitive to stimuli, they can become easily overwhelmed in situations with a lot of sensory input or emotional intensity. So now I'm gonna go back to my father daughter weekend this weekend, and I saw some of these younger people who. Became overwhelmed very quickly.

Cathy: Exactly, and I think you would say, you know, bringing it back into my world that's me, is that I can go into pretty much any environment, but I have to have an out.

I am somebody who needs to have a car that I can leave with. I like to sleep in my own bed if possible. That doesn't always work out, but I need to know that I'm gonna have time alone or else. I have a lot more difficulty doing things. What is harder for kids? I'm an [00:29:00] adult now and I can state this and I can choose it.

Right. I can say, and it does, I can't think of a time it's driven you crazy, but sometimes when I'm like, I wanna have my car. I wanna be able to leave. I know that's not easy for you. Or for other people. You're like, let's just go in one car. Let's just, let's just spend the night.

Who cares if we don't have a pillow? You know? And these are hard things for me. And a kid though doesn't have choices. Yeah, and I am, I am saying that as a kid who had to go through that and then these kids, if, and again, I don't think the point of this is go label your kid highly sensitive. I think the whole point of this is a Elaine Aaron wrote a book that gave us language for things that we, in our society have tended to call wrong.

There's something wrong with you. This shouldn't bother your feet. Why are you wearing sunglasses when there's no sun? Why do you smell everything? What's wrong with you and all of a sudden you are the problem. You are too much. As my girls would say extra. [00:30:00] You know, and what she was able to do is give language to something that, a significant part of the population experiences and instead of beating themselves up for it, they say, oh, that's just how, how I deal with the world.

I literally view it as a thin veil between me and the world. And. I think with these kids that your friends may be saying, oh, are they highly sensitive? It's not about calling them that. It's about recognizing that what they deem as doable or easy or shouldn't bother them. It does. And it's not about changing them.

Well, it's about acknowledging that,

Todd: and we shared this example a million times, but when the pizza guy knocks on the door for the first 10 years of our marriage, I'm like, You would always say, will you go meet the pizza guy?

Cathy: I also ask you, I do so much like, you know, emotional labor kind of work and do all these things, but when I have to make a phone call, I ask Todd to do it. And a lot of times he can't and I have to do it myself, but phone calls are very [00:31:00] hard for me and I had to do it my whole life. I'm a Gen Xer. It's not that I am incapable, it's that, you know, like I will give you an example of like Todd does phone calls. I was about say 24/7. But you'll get mad. You do phone calls all the time.

You're doing a Zoom, a Marco Polo, a phone call. He's always talking to somebody. And when we are in the car and I can hear the other person talking, I might as well be in the conversation. And I don't mean that as like a slam, like they're too loud. I mean, I am feeling what they're feeling. I am part of the conversation.

I feel like I need to tell Todd how to answer. It's very uncomfortable to me. And so I've said to him before, can you make that phone call later or can you put your earphones in so I'm not hearing them? Because otherwise I'm involved. And he may say, well, don't be. But you see that's not fair.

Todd: Well, and that's why it's important so that we can, it's hard to empathize unless we understand and just going through this stuff now with you, as we check these boxes, it does give me more capacity for empathy. Because I'm [00:32:00] like, oh, wow. Look at these, all these boxes to check. You check four out of the five. So, there was something else I wanted to say about, this topic and I don't remember where I was gonna go.

Oh, so Elaine Aaron, so her book is called The Highly Sensitive Person, she also has a book called The Highly Sensitive Parent. She's got a whole bunch of offshoots over that idea. So that's one tool, and it is, it's an old book, 1996, I think.

Cathy: Yeah, it, it, this has been around for a long time and I think that the thing that we wanna remember, 'cause we did a show a couple weeks ago about frameworks and how helpful frameworks are and labels and such. It's not about, oh, my kid's a highly sensitive person, this is a problem, or, so now I'm just gonna never say anything about it. It's really the same as any other framework of like, what's your Enneagram number, what's your love language? It's understanding your kid or your partner or yourself is that I,

Todd: it's a vehicle of understanding.

Cathy: I no longer say to myself, These tags or the stuff on my [00:33:00] feet shouldn't, I mean, Todd, what do I do with my feet every night? Like I have to put lotion on them. You put

Todd: you're cold feet on my warm skin. I

Cathy: do that too.

That's what you do. But I like put lotion on them. I take care of them. My feet are so sensitive, the bottom of them. And interestingly, yoga helped me kind of learn how to be barefoot all the time. I love it. But then afterwards I have to wash my feet. I I there like the other day, I'll just give you an example.

I washed the floor two days ago. I did like I mop the floor and everybody in my family knows I love to mop, and then I walked around on it and I could feel the chemicals on my feet. Hm. And I know someone will say, no, you didn't. I do. And so I have to go wash them because it's like, and I know you're people will probably say then don't put chemicals on your floor.

But what I mean is it was still wet. It was still had, 'cause I did, I had some Mr. Clean in there and some other things. I'm gonna get emails telling me to use vinegar. I know. I just like the smell. And how dare

Todd: you dare use Mr. Clean.

Cathy: I know, but my point is, is that when I stepped on I didn't like it.

And so that is something. [00:34:00] That it, you know, last week with Millie, I said when people sneeze in the car, I roll down the window. I don't think everyone should do that. I feel it. I feel the sneeze in the car. So goodbye. I'm saying this not 'cause it's about me. I'm saying 'cause I'm like, me, me, me. Your kid has different needs than you.

That's what I would say to these dads or to these parents. And your goal is not to get them to be like you. Your goal is to help understand them better and be curious about what they're communicating to you If they are super shut down. It's not about how do I discipline this or how do I make them not be shut, shut down.

It's about recognizing this might be a little loud for them. Maybe we'll sit in the back row. Maybe we'll take a 15 minute break and come back when it's less loud.

Todd: I think this is a super important topic because I don't know, I think us human beings, well at least I can't speak for human beings. I'll go for me.

Because I'm like, well, who? You know? Why are you wearing your [00:35:00] sunglasses? The clouds are out. You know the clouds. You say that to me all the time. Right. And I think it's really hard for somebody who's not like this. To understand. Somebody who is like this. So I think it's an important, it, it helps me develop better empathy, which is just be able to walk in your shoes.

I can't walk in your shoes. I don't know what it's like to have a need to roll the window down every time somebody sneezes. But if I can understand that that's, I dunno if it's wiring. Probably, it's probably not cultural conditioning. It's probably a nature versus a nurture thing, isn't it?

Cathy: You think so?

I mean, I don't know. I know that, I learned that like my shyness or my, my kind of feeling the world a little bit more. That I had to push through that in some points, which is good. That's it. These, that's not a problem. And that I had to learn how to adapt to society. And then I also had to, as [00:36:00] I got older, circle back and acknowledge.

Come back to myself and be like, now what am I doing for society and what do I really need? Right. And that's part of growing you, you recognize that. But I think, I think our kids come into the world as they are and sure there's some things they learn or maybe, but I also think if you've got a kid who's like, it's really loud in here and you know, this really verges on things.

As far as neurodiversity being on the spectrum, ADHD like. There's a lot of, they're not all the same thing.

Todd: I'm glad you brought that up 'cause that was gonna be one of my questions. 'cause you have autism which is the umbrella. Autism is the umbrella. And Asperger used to be under the umbrella, but now do we use, now it's on the spectrum.

Now it's Oh, the spectrum. So the spectrum is like autism spectrum, a big umbrella. So when you hear spectrum, when we're talking about spectrum, we're talking about autism spectrum I didn't know that. I thought autism and spectrum may be sometimes some weirdly nuanced. Differently, but no, those two terms belong together.

Cathy: The [00:37:00] autistic spectrum. Okay, so it's like, it means that there's a lot of gradients in there. Is

Todd: h are HSPs underneath that spectrum or no? You know,

Cathy: I don't, I don't know. I, and I'm saying that as far as the reason why is because my experience with, neurodiversity and autism was very focused around studying boys.

Because that's how autism was. You know, it was, it was around studying boys and what autism and ADHD was, what also what it looked like in boys. And then what that means is we missed a lot of girls who were ADHD. And on the spectrum, it looks different in girls, which wouldn't surprise you, right. I'm saying that because when it comes to being a highly sensitive person, I don't believe them to be the same thing.

I don't think it falls under that umbrella, but it's not that different. It's as far as like your attunement is different and I think it's, there could be people [00:38:00] who are listening who have similar things that I'm experiencing who have gotten a diagnosis on the spectrum where it may be similar.

Like I remember listening to, It was one of Glennon's podcast, and actually people have emailed Glennon and said You should. Get diagnosed for they, they've thought she's on the spectrum because of the challenges she talks about. And then Morgan Harper Nichols, who is one of my favorite artists, she was diagnosed as an adult to be on the spectrum and women are finding that that is, answering a lot of questions for them.

I have obviously looked through these things and I don't fit a lot of the criteria when it comes to learning, when it comes to, experiences with people. I like, there was one that I was like, oh, I don't have that experience at all. And maybe that's because I have learned, I have to navigate. Navigate, yeah.

Like, I don't really know. I think we're, I don't think that the. Best minds in the business know yet [00:39:00] not, or in the, yeah, we're medical still working on, I think we're still learning this, this spectrum and what it means.

Todd: So, I wanna say a quick few sentences on HSPs and then I'm gonna tell you what ChatGPT says about the difference between these two.

Cathy: Who is ChatGPT anyway?

Todd: Regarding HSPs, it's important to note that being a highly sensitive person is not a disorder of course, or a negative trait. Of course, it's simply a characteristic of personality that can have both positive and challenging aspects. Many HSPs possess qualities such as creativity, empathy, and a strong ability to connect with others in a deeper level.

However, they may also need to manage their sensitivity to prevent being overwhelmed and to maintain their wellbeing. Yeah, it's a lot of what you just said.

Cathy: I mean, that's the thing is I think that when it comes to labels, it's. Does it help you? And I think that I went through a phase more in my thirties and early forties was I needed answers about why I reacted to the world the way I did.

And I've already integrated all [00:40:00] that where I don't walk around telling people I'm a highly sensitive person anymore. Like it, I know what I need and I ask for it. and I, like I said, I sent you that. TikTok the other day. 'cause I thought it was funny. 'cause you're like, oh my God. These are all the things you do.

But it's less about the label and more about understanding how you work. And what, and that if something bothers you, that doesn't mean you're a problem. And I think our society is shifting that understanding. We have a very, and you know, and this is the case. We have a very, masculine model of how to go through the world, and I'm, and I'm speaking very general and generally masculine because I know men are all different too, but it's like, this is how you do things.

'Cause this is my life experience. Thus all of our, you know, Research has been done on men, you know, all of, like, we don't research women that much when it comes to physical things, because we have cycles, things shift. And so they're not, women are not, they don't wanna,

Todd: [00:41:00] they wanna remove any variables.

Cathy: Correct. They wanna remove that variable. So we research men on everything. And then we kind of throw women into the mix. Now again, that's shifting, but not fast enough where we as women sometimes have to follow this model. This is how it looks. This is because that's where the research has been done.

So I don't, I just think that if we understand, we'll go back to the parenting part. If your kid is communicating something, this is too loud. I'm not feeling this. I need a break. Our goal is not to change them. It's to understand them.

Todd: So I wanna just chime in and I'm gonna pretend I'm in that situation. Where like a goal is not to change them. It's to understand them and connect with them. I feel at least, the story I make up about some of the dads on the weekend who have highly sensitive younger daughters that they are like, [00:42:00] But if, I don't know, I can't speak for them, but I'm guessing they would say something like, I'm trying my best.

To meet them where they are. And at the same time, we have to eat food. And if you don't wanna eat food, 'cause there's too many people in the cafeteria, then what? What am I supposed to do? Is it go sit on a bench outside, right? And eat food. And then you, and I'm sure you can have 10 other examples, like so then you're like adjusting everything, not everything, but it's not just about breakfast, it's about how you put on socks. It's about how you eat breakfast. It's how you have a conversation with another person and then like your whole day is filled with Y accommodating that kid and it can get super exhausting. Or mentoring.

Cathy: You know, like you are accommodating. And I also think that you have to remember the age, 'cause you're talking about early elementary, they don't even know abstract thinking till they're eight. So, What I mean by that is they're very black and white thinkers. This either works for me or it [00:43:00] doesn't, and our ability to accommodate them if we can.

Sometimes there we're in situations, we're in the car, we're driving, we can't not drive to the place we're going. And it's uncomfortable. Or we're at the doctor's office. I know you don't like it, but this is what's good. You know? We have to do this to keep you safe and healthy. We can't accommodate everything, but the idea of like, I as a dad or I as a parent, I'm embarrassed that I have to go sit outside with my kid.

That's where we need to do work. Like I was, Todd and I were talking about this earlier today, and all three of my girls went through phases or even longer than phases of they didn't want me to not be around. They, they needed me. At birthday parties, they needed me during ballet lessons. They needed me during dentist appointments, and I didn't it.

It was hard sometimes, and yes, it was sometimes embarrassing, but what's the end goal here? And as their brains grew, they were able to do more on their own over time.

Todd: So let me just, give the [00:44:00] real example of, I don't know how old our kid was or even which kid it was, but, they're at the dentist. And they wanted you to walk in there with them. And it was like a pediatric dentist I think.

Cathy: What happened was my daughter was getting a cavity filled. It was her first time. And she said you, I talked her through it, what it would be like. She's like, you'll be with me the whole time though, right?

And I said, absolutely. I'll be there. I'll be there. I'll be there. When I got to the dentist, it was one of those dentists who said, no, parents can't go back there. 'cause they make it more difficult now. I understood. That he had had experiences where maybe parents were micromanaging or were telling him to st. I don't know what he experienced.

Todd: Bottom line is he had some type of guideline or rule.

Cathy: Rule that parents couldn't go back there. And I said, if that's the case, then we can't do this because I already told my child I would be with her. And he said, I don't have any chairs back there. And I said, I will sit on the floor and I am not there to talk to you.

I said, I just wanna hold my kid's hand. And that's what we did.

Todd: And I [00:45:00] think where I or other parents may get caught up is we forget how old the kid is. That's,

Cathy: she was what, six years old?

Todd: Call it Six or eight. And then what we, what I have done in the past is like, okay, now I'm breaking the dentist rules, for the sake.

'cause I made a commitment to my child, which is wonderful and, but I get caught being like, well, if I don't give her this resilience now. Then she's gonna be 12 years old, still wanting me to hold her hand in the de, which is not true. It's a story. But these are just the things that come to us parents like, well, we gotta somehow give them an abi, give them the ability to deal with challenging situations.

And the trick is, at what point do you let them be challenged?

Cathy: Well, you don't have to create scenarios for them. Like they have to go to school all day and you're not there. They have to deal with peer situations and teacher situations and coaching situations. They have to maybe walk to school. They have to ride a bus.

They're dealing with things [00:46:00] without us all the time. Now you just said the dentist rules. The dentist made those rules for himself. There is no I, there's plenty of dentists. We have a dentist right now who I sit back and talk to my girls the whole time. Right. He doesn't have that rule. The dentist made that rule because for his practice, practice, he, this is what works best liked that. I am not breaking a universal principle about how to interact with people. I am saying what's most important to me is my daughter trusts that when I say I'll be with her, I will. I don't say to my daughter, when you go to school, I will ride on the bus with you. I'm not gonna do that.

Right. 'cause I can't. But I will hold your hand when you're, and he was annoyed, but I sat on the floor, didn't do anything. Held my daughter's hand. And guess what? She comes out. She's she trusts that I, you know, followed through. She felt safe and she got through, which could have been a very traumatic experience for her.

And instead of me saying, well, I'm gonna follow the, and I'm putting this in air, quote the [00:47:00] dentist rule, and here's the thing he could have said, then I can't help you. And then I could have said, okay, we'll go somewhere else. Thank you very much. And I could honor him. I am not becoming.

Someone who then says to everybody, treat my kid the way I do, they may say, I'm not gonna do that. He was able to accommodate me in that moment. My point is is the world is hard. We don't need to create scenarios, and when our kid is with us, the ability to understand them gives them the leverage they need to shift.

They, the more they trust, the more they realize somebody sees them, the more capable they become to venture out in the world. I mean, this is like the whole, you know, idea of like a secure attachment is, I I'm with you, okay, I'm gonna run out in the world, do something and I'm gonna run back to you. and that's what secure attachment is and us being there.

When their infants are older, they know they can run out in the world [00:48:00] and we'll come back and we'll be there. That's the whole goal. And if we say, well, I told you I'd be there at the dentist, but the dentist said I can't, so I'm gonna leave. That's teaching a very different thing.

Todd: So speaking of which, we get a bail because is it already, oh my gosh.

You gotta pick up our kid. Or you have to pick up our kid. I just one last thought. And that is, Where I get caught up. And I think where a lot of other moms and dads get caught up is we, we are not in the present moment. We're thinking about, is my kid gonna struggle with this when they're 10 or 15?

Right. And instead just be where they are. Yes. And right now they're seven. Yes. And they're scared to go to the dentists, so just support them.

Cathy: The story of my kid is like, and again, when Todd and I first started this podcast 13 years ago, people would say to us, the things you're doing may feel good now, but it's going to bite you.

And you know, in the butt later on. It, it didn't, it hasn't they, and I'm not saying because everything went smoothly and seamlessly. I mean, the relationship, the thing, the [00:49:00] focusing on, I see you, I hear you. What do you need now today? Not what can I teach you now so you do better at 20? It's I what you need today.

And our kids have all three had times where they have needed to go inside. We've needed to kind of treat them or, or be with them in a way that maybe is beyond what their age would normally dictate. And then because of that secure attachment, they can let go and go back out in the world. That's how they create that internal, trust, the, the, the body trust and also the, the internal dialogue of I am safe.

That when I don't feel safe, I have people I can go to, and that becomes a dialogue that goes on the rest of their lives and the same time. If we do the opposite, the dialogue that goes on can be more about someone won't see me, someone won't hear me, and we don't need to be afraid of that. All we need to do is what's in front of us.

Todd: So this [00:50:00] Thursday we have a Zen Talk with Devorah Heitner. Yes. So if anybody wants to join Team Zen, just click on that in the show notes.

Cathy: She has a new book coming out in two weeks. It's called Growing Up in Public. I read it. It's awesome. She's gonna be on our podcast in a couple weeks too, talking about it.

I'm telling you, this is really good. Like if you, just joining Team, Zen are coming on for this Zen talk, being able to ask her questions about consent,

about, our kids on social media. These tracking devices we use with our kids, you know, life 360. Talking to them about sexting, like. This is good stuff. You're gonna love this.

Todd: Also, if there's any guys out there or any women out there that have men in their life that want to check out a different way of being with other men, connecting through authentic friendships and, everything else, go to [men living.org](http://menliving.org). Complete a profile, sign up for our newsletter, so many ways to check us out.

And then finally, Jeremy Kraft. He's a baldheaded beauty. He paints and remodels throughout Chicagoland area and his website is [00:51:00] avidco.net. Phone number six three nine five six eighteen hundred. Thanks for joining us, everybody. We will see you next week and keep on trucking.