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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, either 730 or 731. I haven't decided yet if this is gonna be next Tuesday or a week from Tuesday. So,

Cathy: well, let's connect it to

Todd: Dr. Solomon's book.

Todd: When, when does the book come out?

Todd: I'll introduce you in a second, but when does the book come out? Or is it out?

Dr. Alexandra: The book comes out no, it's on October 10th. October 10th.

Cathy: Oh, October 10th. Yeah. So we'll, we'll connect it with that.

Todd: Yes. So that was the lovely voice of Dr. Alexander Solomon, who's been a good friend of ours for a long, long time.

Todd: She wrote a book called Love Every Day, which is going to be the focus of today's podcast. But I think we've had Dr. Solomon on probably three times, maybe four, who knows? Yeah, lucky us. And I'm looking for your bio. Oh, there it is. Dr. Solomon internationally recognized as one of today's most trusted voices in the world of relationships and her framework of relational self awareness and has reached millions of people around the globe.

Todd: Dr. Solomon is a couples therapist, a speaker, author. She's passionate about translating cutting edge curiosity and clinical wisdom into practical tools people can use. To bring awareness. And she does a whole bunch of other things. I'll include it at the, at the, in the show notes, just so you know.

Cathy: But one thing I want to add to the bio, though, is she's a professor at Northwestern and she teaches, is your class called Marriage 101?

Dr. Alexandra: It is. Yeah. Marriage 101.

Cathy: So do what? Which, like who needs to take that class and who does take that class? Like, does every, you know, group take that or is it just for like sociology or for, you know, psychology?

Dr. Alexandra: The class lives in the School of Education and Social Policy in a major that's called Human Development in Context. So a lot of those folks are going to go grow up to become therapists, but it is, it is not a distribution requirement for any major and it's open to anybody in the university. So we've got musicians sitting next to engineers, sitting next to journalism students, sitting next to future therapists. It is, it is so much fun and you have to be either a junior or a senior and we do that because it's the most popular class on campus and that's not a brag, that's just like purely by the numbers that it fills, you know, within hours of registration opening, the wait list fills.

Dr. Alexandra: And Early February is my least favorite time each year because I get so many emails from students. And now it's so cute because now the email is like, My mom is a huge fan of yours. And she says I can't graduate without taking this class. It's really cute how the emails have changed over the years. But it is, it's quite hard to get into.

Dr. Alexandra: We do it once a year. 110 students take it.

Todd: Wow. 110 students. So that's not like the small back when I was at college. You have like the 30 person classroom and then you get the big lecture halls and they probably have you somewhere in between.

Dr. Alexandra: Yeah. And it's, you know, God love the school of education and social policy because it is, it is a small.

Dr. Alexandra: Magnificent school on campus and they, to them, a 20 person class is big. Like they pride themselves on small classes and then there's me like this total bull in a china shop like busting their numbers up and they tolerate me year after year and they let me fill up a big lecture hall and yeah.

Todd: It's so interesting because I, Cathy and I both went to Drake University back in the early 90s.

Todd: I'm guessing there was nothing close to the class that you offer. And out of like, I don't know how many major universities there are, 250, who knows how many offer something. And I know nothing is as good as a Dr. Solomon class, but how much, cause it should be available on every college campus. And I'm guessing it's a minority.

Todd: Would that be a fair guess?

Dr. Alexandra: Oh, yeah. I mean, I still, I mean, it's been, it's been years. Every once in a while, a professor somewhere will ask me for my syllabus, which I'm always happy to share. But there's, you know, a lot of the Christian schools will do sort of a marriage and family class that has a religious angle.

Dr. Alexandra: And then a lot of schools will do an intimate relationships, more of a sociology class. I think what makes Marriage 101 at Northwestern so unique is it's, it's, it's, it's clinical. It's basically like a semester long. Therapeutic journey and all of my TAs are in their second year trained to become marriage and family therapists.

Dr. Alexandra: So we run the breakout groups like small group therapy. My office hours is basically drop in therapy. We're talking about family dynamics and their latest hookup and does this person like them or not like them? So it really is quite Clinical, they read, you know, I have them read some research and some theoretical material, but a lot of it is just, it's just, it's very experiential.

Dr. Alexandra: It's a lot of them looking at their family systems. They do, one of their projects is to go and talk to their attachment figures, usually their parents, and kind of learn. The story of relationships in their family. So they understand the lenses and the biases and the fears that they bring in. So that, I think that's what makes it so unique.

Dr. Alexandra: And I agree. And I, you know, it's been sort of the bane of my existence that all universities aren't doing this. And so one thing I did a number of years ago is I made Marriage 101 into an online course, and I offer like a deep discount for college students because I want them to be, I want anybody to be able to access this material whenever and wherever, even if they can't, you know, sit with me in, in the class.

Cathy: So, you know, I know people are going to ask then is you said you offer a deep discount for college students. Is it for ever all ages?

Dr. Alexandra: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah. All ages. Yep. It is. It is. You know, it's not a one when I made it's called Intimate Relationships 101 and you can find it on my website. And when I made it, it's not a one to one correspondence.

Dr. Alexandra: Of course, it's not a college course. I sort of call it Marriage 101 for the grown and sexy, but we've had college age students take the online

version if they haven't been able to take, you know, Marriage 101 at Northwestern with me. And then I've had people of all ages. So really it is, you know, it's quite comprehensive and I don't ever want somebody to not take the online class because of money.

Dr. Alexandra: So whether it's that college student discount or some kind of a discount, I want the information to be available to people.

Todd: Love it. So your book, that's our topic today, Love Every Day, 365 Relational Self Awareness Practices to Help Your Relationship Heal, Grow, and Thrive. As I have been kind of scanning through the PDF that your publicist sent over, it reminded me of the book that Cathy's been reading for like the last 10 years.

Todd: Which one, sweetie?

Cathy: Oh, the Mark Nepo's book. Mark Nepo. Best, right? The best. And I'm so glad you said that Todd, because I really, I love, these kind of books. I love daily books. I actually, Todd will attest about five years ago, I tried to get one published that I had written and it was, I, and people kept saying to me, including my agent you know, these, these don't sell this, you know, no one wants to read this.

Cathy: I'm like, are you kidding me? I read this every single day and I'm reading the same book. So I was so grateful, to see the format of your book because your, your first two books, They're behind you. Loving Bravely and Taking Sexy Back are awesome and amazing and I, you know, recommend them to people all the time.

Cathy: They're on all of my lists. Yet this one is the daily experience, which I think people do want. Did you get pushback about offering this or because your Instagram was so popular they knew that you would have an audience already?

Dr. Alexandra: You know, I didn't, I did not get pushback and I, like you, I have always loved a one a day book.

Dr. Alexandra: I've always loved that format. The Mark Nepo one, you know, I'm in a women's group that we've been meeting for years and years and when we meet, we've, we spent years using Mark Nepo's book and we would, you know, whatever day we were gathering, we would just open his book to whatever the post was of that day and use that to kind of start our circle experience.

Dr. Alexandra: So I love those micro doses. I think, Cathy, that you are so well suited to do because you, you're, you're, you know, your email blasts, you know, that you, that you do are those just like little micro doses. It's like a little, it reminds me of like when you go to the chiropractor and you just get that little adjustment, you know, just that little dose of, of something that reminds you of, of, of how you want to be showing up that day. And so, yeah, the, I think my Instagram feed definitely was, I was at a place with my Instagram feed where it was ready to be translated into something that is sturdier and more enduring than that ephemeral, like, digital, you know, I would get, I get, I still get, DMs every day of people who are like, remember the one you did a couple weeks ago about boundaries?

Dr. Alexandra: I can't find it now. I was like, okay, now there's going to be a book and I can say, go to April 9th and you can find that one. So I'm very excited to have. Some have a book in a format that I've always loved that really does support what I believe about our healing journey, which is, it's just little step by little step, reminder by reminder.

Todd: Well, and it reminds me of a book called Atomic Habits, which I'm guessing you've heard of, and he's all about, James Clear is the author. He's all about, forget about the big shifts in our lives. It never happens that way. It's. Daily, small shifts that almost go undetectable. And I feel like your book is a platform for such a personal growth journey.

Todd: So I'm, the question, I'm going to change topics. Did you have any idea you're writing a book when you started this Instagram thing? No, God, no. At what point were you like a half, half of the year into it saying this might be book worthy. Like how did that happen?

Dr. Alexandra: Oh, I was like five years into it. I mean, I think I've been posting on Instagram for five or six years and it was just like a weird, you know, like you, I know I don't need to apologize to the two of you for being a little bit woo woo, but it was like, the universe was really obvious this, this publishing company that's doing this book is called Pesci and they are my professional home.

Dr. Alexandra: They have been primarily a publishing company for clinicians and they've been wanting to kind of branch more into like public facing general public. So they were like, do you want to do a workbook? And that same week that they offered me. You know, a conversation about creating a workbook. I got three DMs from people who were like, can you make your Instagram feed into a book?

Dr. Alexandra: So it was like the universe, you know, just kind of brought it all together for me. And I was like, wait a minute. There are about a thousand of these entries. I only need 365. Maybe we do it like this. So it really, like, that's how it happened. It was just sort of, a strange stumbling in to, to this, to this format, but I think it works really well.

Dr. Alexandra: And I love how it turned out.

Todd: Well, and what I like about it is it serves a different type of reader. Cathy reads whatever, a hundred books a year, whatever it is. It's something, some ridiculous number. I read like four because I just don't like reading long form chapters. Like if the chapter is like more than 10 pages, like I'm probably going to fall asleep before I finish it whereas yours are like, you could literally read some of them and like, 32 seconds and then, and then digest it, contemplate it. You even have little prompts for like journaling or meditation, which reminds me of, your guide, the Nipo book. But what I like about it, in addition to the, the short bite size, You have them color coded, which I also love.

Todd: It's Todd's eyes. Yes. And you have each day under a specific category. Tell me if I'm misrepresenting. And here's the categories. Healing from the past, practicing self compassion, honoring your feelings, understanding relationship dynamics. Getting your needs met transforming conflict. Addressing relationship problems.

Todd: Developing sexual self awareness. And finally, navigating love's stages. I love that, because you could either choose Hey, it's September 28th as we record this, or it'd be like, you know what? I have been beating myself up fiercely, so I'm going to find some journal entries on practicing self compassion.

Todd: So I think it's wonderful.

Dr. Alexandra: Yeah. Yeah. We had, we had fun doing it that way because we didn't, we wanted, we like options. My team and I like options. We like to have a choose your own adventure. And so that's exactly the point of it is if today's entry doesn't get you where you need to be gotten, then you can, you know, look through and find.

Dr. Alexandra: A color coded entry that's going to serve you a bit better on that day.

Cathy: And you know, let's, let's go back. I always want to say Allie, Alexandra. That's fine. You can call me Allie.

Dr. Alexandra: Is that okay?

Cathy: It's just so natural because seeing your face, I want to say that, but I also want to use your professional name because I, I like my professional name too, so I want to honor that. But

Cathy: Allie, will you explain relational self awareness to people? Because that's really your, that's really what you focus on, which I think is probably my favorite thing about your work and what I really love to talk to Todd about as well. Like that's, what is relational self awareness and why is that your foundation?

Dr. Alexandra: Yeah, it is. You know, it's the through line in all of the work that I do, whether I'm working as a couples therapist or an educator or a wife in my own 25 plus year marriage. It is basically an on relational self awareness is an ongoing curious and compassionate relationship that we have with ourselves.

Dr. Alexandra: That becomes the [00:13:20] foundation for healthy, intimate partnerships. We can bring relational self awareness into our parenting and we ought to and into our friendships and our colleague relationships, but mostly I kind of point the lens of relational self awareness to our intimate partnerships, which is being willing to be a student of our own reactivity, noticing the reactions we have. And especially I think in the two of you talk about this a lot, especially in our marriages, it is just so easy to, to feel. It actually feels quite convincing that if our partner would just be different, we would suffer less, you know, just that it's so easy to put.

Dr. Alexandra: the stress and strain and disappointment at our partner's feet and wish for them to be different. And, and And this is not about letting our partner off the hook necessarily, but it is about keeping ourselves in the equation, looking at how my stuff plus your stuff equals the dynamics of our relationship.

Dr. Alexandra: And so we've got to have lots and lots of frameworks and tools and practices that help us do that with ever so much gentleness, because it's also not about beating ourselves. But it's about studying our relationship to relationships and how, how we don't come in with a clean slate. We come in primed to particular kinds of hurts and disappointments and sensitivities.

Cathy: Ooh, our relationships to relationships. That's a great, like, just, cause that's really, that's why we're here. You know, our ability, you know, there's so much, you know, you're kind of an old school self help person like I am, and

there's so much individualism in it, and it's about us, and it's about us, it's about us, and I know, Just, you know, because of everything you, you write about, it's really not just about us.

Cathy: It's about, I mean, yes, we need, it's like this, we play with language here, but of course we need to focus on ourselves, but that's so we can show up with other people, for other people, to other people, you know, it's really all about the connections. So I really love that. It's simple as it is. Our relationship to relationships, it's.

Cathy: How we see.

Todd: Sweetie, what do you think your relationship is with relationships with relationships now this morning?

Cathy: I have had a time and I know you are now an empty nester as you know, you are an empty nester period. Our daughter just went away to Madison. Your son left a couple of years ago for college.

Cathy: We still have a daughter at home. She's a sophomore. But two of mine left in August and I mean, I'm not going to take this whole session up for my own theories, but it's been really interestingly challenging. Interestingly, because I'm, I'm kind of surprised. I have been. And there's a lot of other reasons, like, just to add insult to injury.

Cathy: My, my daughter left for Italy in the middle of August. My, next daughter left for Iowa, you know, or I got it backwards, one left before the other. And then my therapist retired a week later. So I just, yeah. And that's more than just she helps me help me and more of another relationship I had to say goodbye to.

Cathy: And so I haven't caught my breath since then because life keeps going. And you You know, they still need me. Like, I think my, before I, you know, just launch into me, have, how have you found? this to be as far as supporting your kids when they're out of the house. How has it been for you? I'm just curious.

Dr. Alexandra: Yeah, it is. I mean, well, first of all, I hear what a season of transition this is for you and a therapist retiring is. Such, it's such a big deal. It's such a significant relationship and I'm so happy for her and so sad for you. I feel that so deeply. I think that I think that I knew as we were approaching this

transition, I think I knew it was going to be challenging, but I don't know that I knew it was going to be quite so gutting.

Dr. Alexandra: Like it's really, it's been so hard. And it's been, I think that I had wanted to make a lot of space for Todd's feeling, my Todd's feelings, you know, because he's also emptying his nest as well. And I know he and Courtney, our daughter, are just, they're so tight. They're so tight. And so I remember saying, I had him on the podcast, I remember saying, In this transition, like we, we did a, a podcast like about a week before our daughter left.

Dr. Alexandra: And I was like, in this transition, I want to hold a big space for you. Like I want to be your rock, you know, and I don't know that I've been able to do that because it's just, it has just rocked my world. I feel. I really feel like I don't know who I am and I, that sounds dramatic, but I remember when I was a young psychologist thinking like these moms, you know, when you're a mom, you got to keep something for yourself because your kids are going to grow up.

Dr. Alexandra: And if you have your whole life wrapped around your kids, you're not going to know who you are. Well, I have not wrapped my life around my kids. I've had a big, robust career and lots of interests. And I still feel very much like, who am I for? Like, what am I about? Like, it just feels really, space and time feel strange.

Dr. Alexandra: Like, the rhythm of a day feels really strange when there's not kids coming in the door at 30. I don't, I don't know how to end a work day. It's, it's just, it's so profound. And I'm so in it, you know, we're about a month in, and I still feel like, I still feel like I'm being worked. You know, and I, yeah, it's a lot and I, and I don't, our daughter, you know, our daughter misses home and misses us a lot and I don't let her, I don't talk to her about how much I miss her, right?

Dr. Alexandra: Cause I want to just be careful about that, but she also knows, you know, so I try to be real without burdening her, you know, and can't just like act like it's fine, but I don't want her to add that layer to what she's going through because what she's going through is so profound, you know?

Cathy: And I think that's the weird thing is I so appreciate having this conversation with you, because I feel like just like you, I, not only have I advocated for it, you know, self care in your own life, my whole, but I have practiced it.

Cathy: It's, it's been a true. practice. I've, and yet right now with my kids being, and even my daughter who's still at home, I feel more enmeshed than I have in previous. I feel

Todd: as they, as they are leaving,

Cathy: I'm feeling more overly connected because, and I, and that could be. a grief response, like holding on to something.

Cathy: How who am I thing? Honestly, you know, Allie, this is, it's an interesting conversation to have now. Cause I'm unclear. Like I really usually don't bring things to the podcast that I haven't kind of worked through. Today's an exception. But I said to Todd, I feel like I haven't stopped and taken a breath because just like you, I, my girls are, I have a daughter who's traveling internationally who sometimes she's like, Hey, you know, I got off the train in Germany and then I didn't know where to go and my phone was dead and I couldn't, and I'm like, I'm like breathing, you know, like I'm going through a different kind of enmeshment and I'm using that word kind of loosely cause I'm not quite sure that's what it is.

Cathy: It's like I feel overly connected to them. Do you have any language for me on that? Or do you want, does that make sense to you?

Dr. Alexandra: It's so, oh, it's so fascinating. Okay. So I got, my son has a challenge. That's not a new challenge, but I am so tangled up in this challenge now, like this, this month, like I can't, like last night I was reactive 10 out of 10. The thing that he reported to me was very minor on the spectrum of things we've been through with him around this challenge, but my reaction was so outsized and it's making sense as you're saying that. It's like I'm, I don't have any distance from it right now. And I think I, yeah, I don't know what the language is, but I think there's something there for sure.

Dr. Alexandra: Something there for me to around as there's more space. I don't know if it's a, if it's a grasping, but it's, I feel that for sure. I'm. Yeah. Todd,

Cathy: I liked that word. I'm sorry, Todd, I know, but I love that word tangled because I don't really like to throw clinical terms on what I'm experiencing. It may apply, but it really feels a little more, it's, it's new to me.

Cathy: I felt in control as a parent, believe me, I'm, I'm not at all, but I understood and I don't understand all of the feelings I'm having. And so anyway, go ahead. Todd.

Todd: Here's here just for the listener. So he. Okay. Here's how I think it is. I can't speak for Dr. Solomon, but I could speak for our family. Yeah. Our kids that are out of the nest, when they have some type of financial need, And it's not just about money.

Todd: Like, Oh, dad, will you pay my tuition? It's just, it's more practical, logistical. I get those phone calls and out of 10 phone calls, I get one and Cathy gets nine and the nine are emotionally based. So if there's some emotion that needs to happen, I love the relationship that you talked about between your husband, Todd, and your daughter, Courtney, but for, for our family, it is, and I'm not proud of this.

Todd: So I want to be very clear, but if there's some emotional need that needs to get met, Cathy has put herself in a position to be better for that phone call or that need than I have. So these kids are of ours that I think we love equally will call me at certain times for very specific reasons and then we'll call Cathy at certain times.

Todd: And the problem is they're both experiencing some radical changes. Like one is going through the Greek system right now, which is Cathy and I both went Greek, but the worst part about the Greek system is the, is the rush process. Like people get chosen based on a two minute video that you make. It's like the most unbelievably archaic, stupid thing.

Cathy: And even if it's not even that, everything you go through, just like, you know, Courtney is right now, you know, dorms and eating in class, everything is new and you're either Understanding it or you're not. You're either in or you're out. You're either, you think everyone else is happy and you're not, you know, it's like, and not everything is bad, but you, you have to be kind of moving with the, the, the experience they're having.

Todd: Yeah. So, and then part two of my thing was, I've been taking a deep dive into Dick Schwartz's stuff on parts work and. What's funny is if something bad happens to one of our kids that Cathy has no emotional response to, it's because it's not touching any of the parts of her that really hit home. What was the example you gave to us last week, sweetie, where, you know, she had a hard time with a class or whatever.

Todd: That doesn't bother me. It doesn't even phase Cathy.

Cathy: But if it's emotional or relational. Or if God forbid the word lonely or unsure, there's words that just hit me. And I know that's mine, Allie, like, okay,

so, you know, we're talking a lot, but how I know this, yet I can't always keep those feelings from pouring through.

Cathy: So that's right.

Dr. Alexandra: Yeah, that's right. Well, yeah. And that's, and I think it is like, don't you think it's around these seasons of transition? Knowing stuff, you know, only gets us so far, right? It's like the force of the transition is bigger than, bigger than our like kind of rational knowledge base, you know, kind of, of strategies that we ought, that we quote unquote ought to have in place.

Dr. Alexandra: And so that's, I think, why we just need our repair strategy. So like I will have to call our son today and like own the fact that I was, it wasn't. mad at him. I was mad about the situation and in a way that was not helpful to him because he, he was bringing me something and I was having a big area and he was like, I'm sorry, I just stressed you out like that.

Dr. Alexandra: So I will have to now like do the cleanup of owning that, you know, I got to look at why I'm having such a hard time. Titrating my reaction and having a step, you know, and just being able to be reasonable about his what is his stressor, right? Like I basically took over his stressor with my stress about his stressor.

Todd: So if you don't clean it up, he will be less likely to come to you next time.

Dr. Alexandra: Oh, for sure. Cause who wants to come to an actual crazy person with their thing? Right. That's right. That's right.

Cathy: Well, and, and that is, and, and, you know, double, double duty here. I was someone who, and this is very generational, both of my parents have passed and, you know, but I was somebody who did not come to my parents with things.

Cathy: I came to them with the good news because that's what they liked. Right. Now it's, I don't know if that's super Gen X or if that was just my family, but they, I always had plenty of good news to share, but I was not going to share my inner struggle because that wasn't. normalized, right? And so I also have like this overcompensation that when my, when that phone rings, I don't want them to think that, you know, that I'm not available.

Cathy: And this was true when they were little too. This isn't really that new. It's just to your point, this season of shifting of how am I going to show up in this way? Where I'm not, you know, cause I know there's an overcompensation of like. I don't want you to ever feel any of these things, or if you do, I want you to know I'm here at all times.

Cathy: Right. Right. It's too much. And that is too much pressure for them too. So, it's like,

Cathy: I think my big question, and you know, this is very connected to relational self awareness because it's like, is even when we've worked through these things, And we know the root and we've pulled that. I don't think we [00:26:40] ever literally pull it out, but we've identified it.

Cathy: Like, what is language that you use either with yourself or people where about, you know, the, the normalization of this, maybe it has some kind of compassionate response. Cause I think neither thinks I should be done with these things. Like why am I still having this experience?

Dr. Alexandra: Well, that's, I mean, I think that's the only, that's, that's the only thing to come back to is self just self compassion, humility.

Dr. Alexandra: Right, like humility around it doesn't like that all of the years of therapy and all of the reading and all the practicing are helpful, but they don't, they don't ever become the substitute for having an emotional reaction. So I think there is, I know for me, right, it is humility and it also is like It's like whatever, whatever we got figured out around having elementary school kids or middle school kids or adolescents, we've not been in this season, right?

Dr. Alexandra: So the context keeps changing. Like I've, I've not ever been 50. I just turned 50. I don't, what, what am I supposed to know about being 50? What am I supposed to know about emptiness? So whatever skills and practices I had in those different contexts and moments, the context keeps changing. So I think that's why we, we will, at least I think I will need it.

Dr. Alexandra: These skills and practices and conversations till I take my last breath, right? I will always need to be in community and in conversation with people who like talking about this, this stuff, because I'm not ever going to be done. I certainly am. I'm certainly savvier than I used to be. I certainly know how to repair, like I know how to repair with my son, you know, I know how to repair with Todd.

Dr. Alexandra: But I don't, I don't, I'm not yet to the point where I'm just not reactive or somehow like just stay above the fray at all times. So I think that's, yeah, self compassion and humility and a little bit of humor maybe, right? Like a little bit of humor that we can still get our asses kicked by all of this.

Todd: I know. So, it's so interesting cause I'm having these little threads that are all pulling together for me this morning. So Cathy, you've been reading personal growth stuff since you were like 12 years old or whatever. Go to therapy, you do, 16, you do all this work on yourself and yet you still find yourself in a struggle and I struggle too.

Todd: It's not that I don't struggle and you, so it reminds me of the both and. So one of my friends texted this to me this morning and it, because you have it in the glossary of your book and that's why I'm going to. Bring it together.

Cathy: Yeah, I think about Allie with both hands.

Todd: So my friend said to me a text. He just read this somewhere. You're allowed to be both a masterpiece and a work in progress simultaneously, which I think is wonderful. But I'm happy to read the definition that you have with both hand, but I think it'd be better suited if you came from you, Dr. Solomon of what the both, why did, why did you put that into the glossary?

Dr. Alexandra: It's just essential because I think our We get so binary. We live in this binary. I mean, so much of our, you know, politics are binary. So much of our, like, identity stuff is binary. You're either gay or straight. You're either black or what, you know, all this sort of like either or binary kind of thinking, polarized thinking, win lose thinking is everywhere around us.

Dr. Alexandra: And we know that our emotional health like really, the the strongest marker of emotional health is the ability to sit in paradox, the ability to sit in tension, because so much about our relationships is not to be resolved. the Gottman's research, John and Julie Gottman's research, that a full 69 percent of the stuff that couples fight about really actually can't be solved because it has to do with differences in values, differences in personality, differences in temperament, differences in preference.

Dr. Alexandra: So really, for most of the things that we struggle with, we've got to find ways to sit in paradox about our relationship, that we are both You know, gifted at this and challenged at this, and we have to be able to sit in those paradoxes within ourselves, right? I am both a masterpiece and a work in progress.

Dr. Alexandra: I am both fully suited to teach this content. And I am still learning this content. Like that's, I mean, that's, that's my biggest both and right is like, and there are times when I will foreclose on one and think I'm too much of a hot mess to teach this. Who would ever listen to me about relationships?

Dr. Alexandra: What the hell do I know? You know, and there's, and I'm like, okay, wait a minute. That's too simple of a story, right? That's me forgetting that I get to be both. I get to be knowledgeable in this area. In fact, because I've struggled so much. In fact, because I've. Sat in such wonderful therapist offices for so many years.

Dr. Alexandra: So like those, you know, brave and scared, patient and easily frustrated. Like that we get to be both of those. And so I think that's, I want to always. I want people to always be looking for the ways in which they need to bring some more context to their story and hold on to more complexity about who they are as people, because that helps us then hold on to complexity about our partners too, right, that our partners also get to be this conglomeration of messy, complicated parts and truths.

Cathy: It's, oh, I just love that so much. And I love it, you know, and it's, you know, it's why I love your writing and, and the things you share because nuance is so important. Obviously the binary is essential and then just nuance in any situation. Like, the other day I was with my daughter and I really had, one of those moments where we had something happen and I had a release and it really wasn't about her.

Cathy: So she, and she knew that, but I had like a release where I was like, you know, breathing, I was crying and I had to say to her. in the midst of it, just hold on. I, you know, I'm going to be able to drive. I just need to do this. And I know when that's happening, that two things are happening. Cause I don't do that very often.

Cathy: That's not really it doesn't happen that often, but number one, it's okay to cry and friend my kid. I'm a human being. She knows it. I've done it before. She knows I I'm resilient and I get through it. So that's one thing. But the other thing is I know it's uncomfortable for her and I know she doesn't like it.

Cathy: I know, I think sometimes we try and like categorize things too neatly, like have emotions in front of your kids. That's how they learn. Period. It's like, it's also very uncomfortable for a kid to see their parent cry. And that's okay. Like I know she's going to go back to her sisters and be like, you guys.

Cathy: Mom, she lost. Yeah, she lost her shit. And, and that's, I'm glad they have each other for that. Yeah. But I, so it's like two, I like to talk about that when we talk about relational self awareness or about your work or what we talk about, because sometimes we, we summarize two things, things too perfectly, like have emotions in front of your kids, period.

Cathy: It's like, no, not great, but it's also good. It's uncomfortable and it also teaches them. So I really, you know, I don't know if you want to speak more about nuance, but there is really, or just how we hold that. Uncertainty, that place in between where it's very gray.

Dr. Alexandra: I think that's such a powerful example because yeah, the binary there would be that you are, you that you would be at risk of saying emotions are good.

Dr. Alexandra: Our kids should see our emotions and you and what you would lose then is the very real reaction that kids have. It doesn't, your daughter's discomfort in the face of your emotions doesn't mean you did harm. to her, but you are making space for all of that to be true is that she, it was, it was not comfortable for her and it did not destroy her.

Dr. Alexandra: You know, your relationship is larger than the impact that that moment had on her.

Todd: Well, I think a word that go that is undervalued is discernment. Yeah. Like there's times when you absolutely, when I absolutely should cry in front of my kids. And then there's other times when it's a really bad idea. And the idea is to, can I pause to see, okay, what. needs to happen in this moment.

Cathy: Bad idea because what's at stake next? Like we need to keep moving or we are in a situation.

Todd: It doesn't matter. Like if you're in front of your kid and all her friends and you start bawling for whatever reason, that's not a good idea. Like now she's gonna have to go answer like all her friends questions.

Todd: Like your mom's weird. Why is she crying? Like, so there are times when stoicism, which is a word that I, have an interesting relationship with because I do men's work and that's all we are is stoic, for goodness sakes. And I'm trying to like say, no, I get the stoicism guys. Let's, let's drop into our heart.

Todd: But anyways, I think discernment is a really important component to parenting for sure.

Dr. Alexandra: I agree. I agree. It's, well, I was gonna make a connection to, to, to marriages too, right? That that's, yeah, that, that is. I think, I lost it. Yes, I agree. I agree. And we can't always, and we can't always discern in the moment.

Dr. Alexandra: Sometimes we are just overcome and that's why we have to always have like our nice, you know, toolbox of repairs. You know, just like, I don't like how I did that. I'd like a do over. In hindsight, I, you know, see now something I didn't see in the moment. Or we, do you want to tell me what that was like for you?

Dr. Alexandra: Because it was like, I imagine it wasn't comfortable for you. So that's right. That discernment I think is really. It's really key. And that it's, and that sometimes, I think the other, you know, this idea of like emotions are good is one of the sweeping things we do. And I think along with that, the corollary is like, I'm just expressing how I feel is another one.

Dr. Alexandra: Like if I'm feeling it, I ought to express it. I feel like I spend a lot of time with my couples talking about the, the, the things we don't say, right? Like the absence of the comment, like we just because we have a thought in our heads doesn't mean, and just because we, we value emotional safety in our intimate partnership doesn't mean that everything that, that we think ought to be said out loud.

Dr. Alexandra: That's another place where discernment is really key, right? It's like checking in with ourselves and having that like filter around. This may be a quote unquote true reflection of what I'm feeling right now, but maybe I ought to. And sometimes the more urgency we feel to say something, that's the indicator that perhaps we ought to just sit with it for a bit longer so that then we really are deciding if it's helpful for our partner to hear and then how we might be able to say it in a way that our partner can hear.

Dr. Alexandra: But I feel like I do a lot of education around like, I'm just expressing my feelings.

Todd: Yeah, where I click that is the difference between revealing from a place of consciousness, a part of myself, and dumping from a place of unconsciousness where I just want to make myself feel better and like vomit all over whoever happens to be in front of me.

Todd: So there's a huge difference and it can all be through the lens of truth, like well I'm just being truthful. Yeah. If it is a disconnecting thing, then it's not that productive.

Cathy: You know, I remember early on, like it was in my early 30s when I really started to connect to the fact that I was not always being honest about my feelings.

Cathy: That I was really worried about everybody else. You know, I was being hypervigilant about everybody else and how do I control a situation with my emotions. And when I really did start to share what I was feeling, it was a bit of a faucet that was turned on too strongly. And I really noticed that it would be like like, and you really realize how these are muscles that you're working, like you are really, so when people are first learning that in therapy or even as a parent, you may, your faucet may be way too turned on initially and you have to like, you know how, it's not that you hold back, you have some boundaries around how you're sharing, how much taking a break.

Cathy: I like what you just said, Allie, about if you really want to say something so bad. That may be one of the things you want to take a look at it first.

Dr. Alexandra: Right. It's when a couple, when a couple is trying to like change that pattern, like if a, you know, if a partner is like trying to step back from saying everything the moment they feel it, it can be difficult for their partner to notice because like what the partner needs to notice is that there's an absence of something that used to happen.

Dr. Alexandra: You know what I mean? Like, like my partner is doing less of that dumping than they used to. And so I think oftentimes, like when I'm helping a couple change patterns. The hardest patterns to notice progress on are the ones where you're going to stop doing something that you used to do. You're going to stop making sarcastic comments or you're going to, you know, do a little bit less dumping.

Dr. Alexandra: And so I think it is like, there are times when we need to really pay attention to the things that are happening less in our relationship and give lots of credit for those things because that is a difficult, that's a difficult skill to learn. And somebody who's working on that skill deserves to be praised and recognized.

Dr. Alexandra: for no longer doing a thing they used to do. It just can be sometimes harder to notice, you know, the things that are happening less.

Cathy: Well, I have one that, you know, I don't know if you notice this or, and I think we've been doing this for a while, so it may not be that new, but because of Todd's history, his traumatic history and versus my history, is if I become If I say I'm angry about something or frustrated, he goes, I get more power, okay?

Cathy: So he goes a little more younger, little boy. And so the, I don't, I don't, I don't think I could think of a time where I've utilized it to literally, literally hurt him, but there have been, when you get that power, then you can say all the things and say, you know, and do all the things you need to do. And what I have learned to [00:40:00] do, over time is to not harm him. And to be honest, is to say, I want you to know everything I'm about to say to you. It's not about you. I'm not angry at you. All the things I'm experiencing are because of all of these other things. And again, because it's between Todd and I, this may not translate completely, but it keeps him 50, like it keeps him.

Cathy: So instead of me being like, I'm angry where he's like, it's me. I'm, I'm. I've disappointed you. It's me. I say right up front, I'm about to say something, but I know it's not about you. Even if it's that you walked into the bedroom last night and turned on the light while sleeping. Yeah. I, that normally wouldn't bother me, but it did because of A, B, C, and D.

Cathy: So I try and stay the same age as him. And, and I, cause I can go, there are times I go kid too, but that's. Yeah. I usually come up, like when we're in an argument, I get very powerful.

Todd: So I get said in another way. If you get mad, maybe not at me, maybe just at the world or at whoever, it doesn't matter who. I do, it does hit something in me because I think of my mom being mad or my dad being mad and I get small or whatever.

Todd: What's great about Cathy is 97 percent of the time she'll have the awareness to be able to tell me. That this is not about you, Todd. And I think that most couples struggle and Cathy's not close to perfect either, but she does have this, this piece of her that can say, just so you know, I'm really super upset.

Todd: And it's not about what happened yesterday. It's all these other things. And I think that if everybody else was gifted with somebody to be in partnership, who has that level of resilience, self awareness, whatever the word

is. It, it disarms me in a way where I can go from seven year old boy back up to 51 year old man pretty quickly.

Dr. Alexandra: That's right. And you are, and she's basically, I mean, she's, she's doing it from a place of compassion, but it's also, self, you know, it's strategic for herself too, because she keeps herself in partnership, right? She doesn't lose him. She doesn't lose you to your little boy state. Okay. So Todd, I would love for you to say more about this.

Dr. Alexandra: Cause I think that in the straight couples that I work with, I think it's so easy for women to miss the impact that their anger has on their male partners. I think because women have, have felt historically so disempowered that their voices are so dismissed that it's really hard for them to understand how powerfully shrinking that their anger is right and it's not, it's not women's fault that men go into a little boy place in the face of women's anger.

Dr. Alexandra: It's not women's fault. I'm not blaming, but I think when women miss that that's happening, it's, and I think it's hard for men to put language around that experience of becoming small, of becoming young. And so nobody, I feel like neither person really understands. What's happening and how powerful that is.

Todd: Well, it's so, it's an, it's an interesting point because it's funny in my men's group that I am a part of, it's a lot of that. It's not the abusive husband. It's what happens is they get really small and childlike and Cathy and I have been talking about this forever and my nervous system still isn't at the point where it can regulate it.

Todd: I mean, I think it regulates more quickly now than it did 10 years ago but it's still like whenever that punch happens and the punch would be like Cathy screaming at the world because something unjust just happened still without exception, it, it, I feel it in my gut and it happens in my body and I am able to work through it much quicker now because I keep working on myself. I think I'm going to be an 80 year old man someday and Cathy's going to be mad because we just elected this leader who doesn't care about climate change or whatever it is and she'll get mad and I will get small. Now hopefully I'll get small for a minute versus two and a half hours.

Todd: But, and I would love to like snap my fingers and make it all go away and completely, let go of whatever that wound is that I acquired from when my parents used to fight with each other. But I hope it goes away, but I don't know if it's going to.

Cathy: Is that what you hear too? So is, Allie, are you saying that like when you're working with couples that the male response is often a shutting down? Is that what you, is it, is this, is this common?

Dr. Alexandra: For sure. And a, and a becoming, and a becoming young, feeling, feeling quite young and feeling scared, you know, and that's, I think that's not a word that is a particularly comfortable word for a lot of men to use, but like it, it, it feels frightening to be, in the face of her anger.

Dr. Alexandra: And I think that's just really hard for her oftentimes to get her head around that she doesn't, she doesn't understand the impact and weight. of that energetic shift inside of her because she felt historically, whatever, disempowered or invisible or, you know, like the idea of like, how am I that powerful, I think can be really hard for her to get her head around.

Cathy: You know, and for me, I love what you said about like, I stay, if I say that up front where I don't, you know, I stay in partnership with the 50 year old rather than talking to the seven year old because my history then. is all I want to do is take care of that seven year old, so I'll miss the boat on being able to really share what I want to share because he goes small and I'm so concerned about him that I'm like, forget what I said, forget what I said.

Cathy: I don't need anything. I don't need anything. And again, so then I feel guilty. Then I feel ashamed. Then I think of power as being something that I lose relationship if I go powerful. And when I, and I'm, it's not even. Overpowering all the time. It's just a louder voice. It's anger. It's sadness. It's disappointment.

Cathy: And that can, even if you're not attempting to overpower, you know, and I'm saying this to all women and men for even if you're not attempting to overpower their powerful feelings. Yeah.

Todd: Yeah, it's so for some reason I'm thinking of Terry Reel and Terry Reel has this relationship grid. I don't know if you're familiar with this.

Cathy: Oh yeah, she works with him sometimes.

Todd: And on the horizontal axis it is two boundaried or like walled off and the other one is complete enmeshment. That's on the horizontal axis and on the vertical axis it's grandiosity up top and it's shame down below. My, my, thankfully I just stay. When I go somewhere, I go into shame, like I did something wrong, I feel bad.

Todd: There's a lot of men out there that go into grandiosity and they inflate themselves and they direct their anger instead of towards myself, I direct it outwards. And it is a, it's a tricky thing. And then one other thing I want to mention is I work with men sometimes and like the worst wound to tap into.

Todd: There's times when guys I'm like always inviting these guys to step into their vulnerability, step into their emotional states, step into their heart. And then when they do that, there's been wives, partners who say, well, you man up for a second and like. That just sends them reeling because their heart is wide open, like more exposed than ever.

Todd: And then if they get told to man up, it becomes... shame. They're, they're like, screw that Todd, you told me to get into my emotions. It does not work at all. And so, and I don't know what to say to those guys in those moments, because I want to get the wife on the phone saying, what are you doing?

Dr. Alexandra: That's right.

Dr. Alexandra: This is what you said you wanted. This is what you said you wanted. You wanted a partner who is more emotionally available. And then as he becomes emotionally, well, I think, I think in some of it is what, is what Cathy is saying is that it can be difficult. Then I think sometimes that man up is, I don't want to have to take care of you.

Dr. Alexandra: And I think women, I think women get that wrong. Sometimes he may not, he might actually not even need to be taken care of in that moment, but her go to is. if you're, if you're open hearted, if you're vulnerable, if you're sad, I now have to take care of you. So she might be getting that wrong. That might be some of it.

Dr. Alexandra: And also, you know, patriarchy doesn't miss any of us. So she's been socialized to say that men ought to be a certain way. So when he's open hearted and vulnerable and sad, he's subverting the patriarchy too, right? He's pushing back again. Like he's showing up in a way that is not how the patriarchy taught him to behave.

Dr. Alexandra: And She also doesn't know how to, how to deal with it because she's been taught that men ought to be X, Y, and Z away. I know that's very hard. I hear you. I get, I find that to be triggering when I, when I help a male partner open his heart. And then if she is not able to kind of meet him in that.

Todd: Yeah, what's, what's super, topical for me is I will say to Cathy in these moments, I'm like, Cathy, you don't need to take care of me.

Todd: I'm here. I'm my 51 year old self. And I don't know, sometimes they're just words. And I actually am still in my seven year old. I'm pretending to be my 51 year old because I don't want her. She doesn't want a kid. She wants an equal partner. Not that we can't hold space for our wounded children, you know, in her children, but, I don't know if there's anything I could do to convince Cathy. This is like a session. She doesn't need to take care of me in that moment, even though I am scared. But I also know that there's a, a elder version of myself that knows that it's all going to be okay. But I feel like there's sometimes Cathy could sniff out when I'm BSing her for sure.

Todd: Yeah, yeah, yeah. He's way too intuitive for me to just pretend. So I don't know. I don't even know if there's a question in there. It's more a comment.

Dr. Alexandra: Well, even. Cathy, even if you know it's a little bit of BS, does it help you like resist the urge to take care of him?

Cathy: It does a little bit in that I feel like we're at least speaking the same place.

Cathy: Like I still know, I can tell by his face, there's, you know, you, when you've been with a person long enough, you can tell by the way their face changes that they, my language in my head is that they've gone young, you know, he's scared. He's, he does, he's uncertain. He wants to fix, you know, all those things.

Cathy: But just him saying, I'm, I'm I'm okay. It's, it's a, it's a way of him saying, I'm okay. You can keep going or I'm okay. You can, you can be sad. So it's not a waste. I think Todd is saying the same thing that you and I started talking about with our kids being gone. We can't not feel the things we're feeling, you know, like we are, I love, I wrote down, you know.

Cathy: I wrote down a bunch of things you said about context, but I really have always loved the word humility. And I just really appreciate it when it comes back to in these kind of things, because the idea that we're supposed to not feel that, of course, it's okay for Todd to be scared in those moments. Of course, it's okay for me to be confused right now.

Cathy: You know, of course, it's okay that you are reactive about something that you're, you're concerned about with your, your son.

Cathy: We are. That's being human. Yeah. And right now I'm in my very right you know, more teacher mind. So I can say these things very, you know, you know, in this way where it sounds so clear.

Cathy: I don't always feel that way in the experience, but I.

Dr. Alexandra: Yeah. So. Well, yeah. Cause it's ultimately, it's ultimately just love. Like when, when Todd is saying to you, it's okay, keep going. Even if he's, you know, 72 percent small, you know, and the rest of him is, but it's just, it's just love. It's just him saying like, I'm having a hard time, but I want you to keep going.

Dr. Alexandra: And even if you, if even a part of you wants to take care of him, even as you have your feelings, like that's just love, right? There's something about. It's not all going to be neat and neat and tidy and we don't always alternate which of us is triggered, which of us isn't triggered, but there's something about that like holding what I'm hearing you guys talking about is you're both holding some approximation of a dual awareness of my pain and their pain, holding on to my hurt alongside my partner's hurt.

Dr. Alexandra: I really think that's the best we ever do, right, is just kind of hold some approximation of that dual awareness which is like I'm feeling for you, but I'm also feeling for me. I gotta care for you while I'm also caring for me. Like it's just, it's just going to be messy, but that holding on to, I don't want to hurt you, but I also got to have my experience.

Dr. Alexandra: Like that's just, that's sort of it, right? Like that's just intimacy.

Cathy: Yeah. And that's the, and then when you get through that, That's when you're like, you know, that's the, you know, it's kind of like I was saying before about crying in front of your kid and it's good for them. They learn, but it also is uncomfortable for them.

Cathy: It's the same thing in these, you know, intimate partnerships where this is so difficult in the moment where you're having, you're trying to hold the space for someone else. You're feeling all these feelings, but when you move through it, that's when it is the amazing experience of how much more you know each other and how deeper you are and how less afraid you are to do it again.

Cathy: Bye. I am not afraid to bring up things with Todd ever, even when he goes into kid. I just know it's, it's a bit of like a walk through the woods, you

know? It's uncertain, you know? That's right. That's right. But I trust the woods. I know that there's light in it, you know?

Todd: Mm. So two things. One is, doc, you're gonna have to send us an invoice for the session.

Todd: Yeah. Never, never. Second thing, I, you said, did you say you wrote for a thousand entries. [00:53:20] And you had to pare it down to 365?

Dr. Alexandra: Well, I basically have been putting something on Instagram just about every day for five years. So there's, there are like so many entries.

Todd: How did you go about paring it down? Was that fun? Was that laborious? Was it really challenging?

Dr. Alexandra: It was so fun. So I've got this team of these young women in my life. I'm just so freaking blessed by my, my team, relational self awareness ladies. So we printed out a ton of these entries. We gathered at my house. and sat at the table and just sorted and passed them back and forth and, you know, ranked them.

Dr. Alexandra: And it was just a big, messy organizing project, which I love, like that part of me that could just stack and sort and color code things all day long and just be happy as a clam. So that was how, that's how we did it. But it took, you know, I think I it's Always this way with these projects. I'm sure you guys have, I'm sure your conference every year is like this where it's just, you know, you think it's gonna be this much work and then it's like 10x that amount of work.

Dr. Alexandra: It was one of those things where I was like, I mean, how hard could it be to turn an Instagram feed into a book? And it was really, really hard. It was a lot of work. But, but we did it. We figured out how to do it. And Made something that I think is pretty is beautiful and I think will be helpful to people.

Cathy: It is beautiful. And like Todd said, we have it in PDF form. So I've read, I read your Instagram feed every day. So I've read, not that I've got them integrated, but I know the way you write and I know the way that you, you know, it's one of these things that you do so beautifully is you cover it all the bases because like you'll say something maybe that could be, I wouldn't say it's necessarily triggering but something maybe kind of a big statement. And then underneath it you will explain and if you feel this way this is you know then here and and if that was difficult maybe it's because of this and so.

Cathy: It, it allows people to feel safe in that comment because you're pointing out all the different reasons why this could be interesting, challenging, triggering and, and that it's okay. And so you kind of like always leave a nice place for people to land. That's what I think is so amazing about your writing.

Cathy: And I'm curious because I find that, do you still get pushback about things? Like, do you have any trolling? Do you have any people who say you don't understand, or do you find that because of the way you write, you're able to kind of meet?

Dr. Alexandra: The majority of needs. I think I probably get a lot less trolling than other people do.

Dr. Alexandra: The times that I will get trolling is when I write things that are explicitly about gender and race and sexuality. And sometimes it is from sometimes I'll do something and I'll get it from both sides, right? Like people who are quote unquote liberal who feel like I haven't gone far enough and people who are quote unquote conservative who are triggered by what I'm saying.

Dr. Alexandra: So then I'm like, ah, like those are, those are difficult spaces as both of you know. Yeah. And I do, I mean, I think that is. I think that part of my childhood wound stuff is around a fear. of leaving people out or being misunderstood. And so I think there's like a way in which I have a gift therefore of like sort of fast forwarding and imagining the ways I might get criticized.

Dr. Alexandra: And so, and, but then I think it also is, sometimes I lose my, I think there's so much context I give that sometimes it can be hard to like, just see the, the through line. Like, I think there are some writers who will just are so much, they're more okay being controversial. They're okay just like saying it one way.

Dr. Alexandra: And if you have a reaction that's yours to deal with, I think I feel really concerned about people feeling reactive because I ask people to think about hard things. And, and so I think I will like kind of stand on five sides of it to support people. And then, and then when somebody highlights that I didn't stand on the sick side of it, you know, then I have to like take care of my little girl and be like, it's okay, people are allowed to have their feelings.

Dr. Alexandra: And of course, one Instagram post can't summarize this entire issue. Yeah, but I think, yeah, I like that kind of engagement because sometimes when somebody When somebody quote unquote trolls, it really is because I've

missed something. And then that's great. I can come back the next day and refine it and add a layer to it.

Todd: So did that sound familiar with Dr. Solomon just said about her not wanting to.

Cathy: Yeah. I mean, It's, it's why I love Dr. Solomon's work because I find so much of myself in it, you know, like she just makes me, it just is a nice reflection for me. And I think there are some. I'm doing that sometimes too, and it's all about the words we use. Like historically, people say, I over rationalize, and I'm like, well, it's not that I'm trying to over rationalize 'cause I'm not really doing it for me. I'm doing it to make sure, you know, I've thought about you that Yeah, yeah, yeah. is not the same as yours. That that's because of privilege, because of race, because of where I live, because of socioeconomic that I wanna make sure you know that this thing I'm saying can affect you differently and that I just think you do it really beautifully. So, and there are people who make a living out of finding the sixth side. You know what I mean? For sure. There are people who are like, well, she didn't use this word, you know, so you're always going to run into that.

Todd: So before I close shop here, I, we're going to talk a little bit more about, Dr. Solomon's book. But Dr. Solomon is also going to be drive, be with us at our in person event on January. What is it, sweetie?

Cathy: 26, 27. This is our Zen Parenting 2024.

Todd: And she's going to be here, Dr. Shefali, Michelle Akard Dr. John Duffy, Devorah Heitner and many others. So if you want to, first of all, go buy Dr. Solomon's book now. First and foremost. On whatever book selling platform, I'm sure it's everywhere, right doc?

Dr. Alexandra: It's everywhere. Yeah. I love to send people to bookshop. org because it supports your local indie booksellers. Bookshop. org.

Todd: And then you can meet her in person in January if you choose to come. What were you going to say, Doc?

Dr. Alexandra: I just, I need to tell you how much I love Zen Parenting, the conference. I'm so, you know, I first. And the first way I found you guys was through my best friend, Allie, and she was, she was, we went to the conference together and she was, she had a booth to sell her really beautiful book, The Heirloom, there.

Dr. Alexandra: And I remember the first year I sat in your audience, Just totally in awe of the vibe between the two of you, the vibe the two of you created at this conference, like the speakers that you brought in. It was so incredibly like heartwarming and uplifting and like emotionally like safe and validating. And then I've, I've been to a bunch of them that I was there the year that you had Glennon Doyle and Abby Wambach there, and I've met so many wonderful, become familiar with so many wonderful speakers through the lineup that you all have brought year after year. And so just the fact that I get to be now, you know, in this lineup is just such a thrill. I love, and the thing that I quote, I mean, I quote you guys, I reference you a lot.

Dr. Alexandra: My favorite thing is, when I talk to parents about like parenting your kids in such a way that they want to come home for Thanksgiving, like that is just. Such a heartbeat. Like it is such a, a, a guideline, such a, a solid like place to come back to of, of show up for your parenting journey so that your kids wanna come home for Thanksgiving.

Dr. Alexandra: And not everybody, parents, their kids in that way. And that's such a helpful reminder. It's one of my favorite things that I've heard you guys. That's right, sweetie.

Todd: We made that up. Nobody else made that up. We, we made it up.

Cathy: We filled that from Dr. Duffy, Jeff Duffy said that to us. But we, what I will say, is that I so agree.

Cathy: And, and it's been interesting this journey, you know, talking to parents. We've been doing this podcast 13 years. So when you start talking to parents about these things, our kids are very young and there was a lot, I wouldn't say a lot, but enough pushback about, well, you guys don't understand what it'll be like when they're teens, or you guys don't understand these things that you're saying they're not going to apply when they're 15, whatever.

Cathy: And they're universal principles, and it wasn't about like proving people wrong. It's just that, of course, it's difficult. Of course, you're kind of going against a societal pressure to do certain things when it comes to your kids or to force them to do certain things. But the goal in the long run, where you, where we are now, you and Todd and Todd and I are we now have adult kids and how these things, all you're doing is creating a relationship for a lifetime. You see that then a lot of these things, the societal pressures or the grades or the right school or the right clothes or the right friends, those things really Fall away.

Cause all you want is for this person to be themselves and for you to be that person who sees them for that person and honors who they are.

Cathy: That's it. It, it's a challenge because society will keep pushing back on that. But you know, I know I, because I know you, I know your relationship with your husband and your kids, and it's very nice to like your children. Yeah. Do you know? I mean, I know that sounds.

Cathy: Simple, but do you know what I mean?

Dr. Alexandra: Oh, absolutely.

Dr. Alexandra: Absolutely. To feel like your kids are some of your favorite people on the planet.

Cathy: Yeah. And not because of their successes or what they did, but because of the intimate, the relationship we've built. That's the thing that people will say those kinds of things like to like your kid. And they'll be like, well, my kid's still pulling a C and I'm like, yeah, those aren't right.

Cathy: That's not what we're talking about. My kid's not them. My kid's not them. Those are the, so. So we just think we're so glad that you are a headliner at our conference this year because you are the best of the best when it comes to talking about relationships. And as you know, we're talking about teens and young adults this year, which applies to, again, both of our families.

Cathy: And do you, like, not that you have to, like, say what you're going to say there, but do you like talking about, like, Team, you know, relationships and young adult relationships, like, is that it?

Dr. Alexandra: Okay. I love it. I love, you know, every year I speak at, Northwestern's like family weekend, like they have, they'll have like, they'll pull, ask a few professors to give kind of a signature lecture.

Dr. Alexandra: And so I use that stage as a chance to just like basically like whisper in the parents ears around the kinds of things I want them to be thinking about around supporting their emerging adults romantic relationships. And so I imagine that's what I will want to talk to the two of you about doing at the conferences, talking about how we as parents support our kids dating and romantic lives and all of the massive ways that we are going to get triggered by watching them, you know, dating, not dating too much of this, not enough of

this. And so that's what I really want to talk about. I love helping parents kind of understand all of what gets stirred up in them around their kids relationships.

Cathy: Well, you just know, I mean, you know this from us because you've done, you've even been on our panels before for a conference, like you get, you do your thing, like you don't need to run it by us. Like you go up there and do your thing because sometimes it's things that come up that day where you're like, okay, I got, you know, you're going to, we know that people, everybody

Todd: Future memo to anybody who might speak at one of our in person events.

Todd: You're going to decide what you talk about

Cathy: because it's your expertise. Like that's why you're here. And most of the people listen to Zen Parenting, I would say 90 percent know your work because they follow you. They love you. So you have an audience who trusts you and, I just, I'm just so excited and I just appreciate your work, Allie, and, just thanks for always coming on and supporting our show.

Todd: I do have one to ask. And you can say, no, I think conflict and repair is such an understated thing. And it's funny, you talked about it today with your son last night, even though he wasn't, you weren't even mad at him. There's still repair that needs to happen. So you're going to decide what you talk about, but I would love for, for that to be at least a small piece.

Todd: Cause it's a kind of a big piece of your book. It's one of this one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight different topics that you have. So it's kind of a big one. So anyways. Okay. The name of the book, Love Every Day, 365 Relational Self Awareness Practices to Help your Relationship Heal, Grow and Thrive.

Todd: Dr. Solomon, thank you so much. We are going to be in touch with you. The book comes out which day? October 10th. 10, 10, 23. Go pre order the book if you can. Dr. Solomon, we'll have you back sometime soon. Thank you so, so much.

Cathy: We love you.

Dr. Alexandra: Thank you. I love you too. Thank you, Todd and Cathy. Bye bye.

