

[00:00:00] **Todd:** Here we go. My name's Todd. This is Kathy. Welcome back to another episode of Zen Parenting Radio. This is podcast number 697. Why listen to Zen Parenting Radio? Because you'll feel outstanding. And always remember our motto, which is that the best predictor of a child's well being is a parent's self understanding.

[00:00:28] **Todd:** So we are three shy of 700, but we have a very special podcast for you today. We have our very dear friend, Dr. Shefali Sabari. Dr. Shefali, welcome back.

[00:00:39] **Dr. Shefali:** Hi, I'm so happy to be

[00:00:40] **Todd:** here with you. I'm so happy to have you. I'm going to read a quick thing on Dr. Shefali. I think most of you know who she is, but in case you don't, uh, she received her doctorate in clinical psychology from Columbia university, specializing in the integration of Western psychology and Philosophy.

[00:00:57] **Todd:** She brings the best of both worlds to her clients and to us as a podcast audience. She's an expert in family dynamics, personal development, teaching courses around the globe. She's written four books, three of which are New York Times bestselling books, including two landmark books called Conscious Parent and The Awakened Family.

[00:01:15] **Todd:** And this is what, fourth or fifth time we've had Shefali on, sweetie? Yeah. And then

[00:01:20] **Cathy:** the book that you put out a couple of years ago, um, about, uh, women, um, I loved that book. What was the title?

[00:01:26] **Dr. Shefali:** Radical Awakening. Radical

[00:01:27] **Cathy:** Awakening. Radical Awakening. Yeah, that was awesome. So

[00:01:30] **Todd:** Dr. Shafali is here with us. Um, she wrote another book called The Parenting Map and we're going to talk, we're going to take a deep dive into very specific parts because it's a book that has a lot of stuff in it and for us to do it, um, you know, explore it all in a 60 minute interview is not going to happen.

[00:01:45] **Todd:** So Kathy and I picked out a few of her favorite parts and we're going to take some deep dives into that. And there's also a summit coming up and I want to invite Dr. Shivali to talk about that summit right now and then

we'll talk about in the end. What is this summit all about Dr. Shivali? [00:02:00]
So I got

[00:02:00] **Dr. Shefali:** together all my dear friends in the field of psychology, education, mindfulness, counseling to talk about what their greatest insights, tools and strategies are for parenting.

[00:02:13] **Dr. Shefali:** Kathy was one of my guests. And, uh, it's a free summit with more than 30 global experts. So I invite people to join. It's absolutely no cost. And it's going to be held, uh, 20th to the 23rd of February. So give them the link and they can join us.

[00:02:32] **Todd:** Yep. Link all the information will be in the show notes for the book, for the summit, everything else.

[00:02:36] **Todd:** And you have to go

[00:02:36] **Cathy:** to the website and check it out. Like you should go there anyway, just to like, you know, sign up for it. But the people that Dr. Shefali got. for this summit. It's such a wide variety of, you know, like she said, different perspectives, experts. I was just, that was fun enough just reading through all of her experts.

[00:02:52] **Cathy:** So, uh, Gabor Mate is, uh, one of the experts. Um, Dr. Nicole, what's Nicole's last name? Uh, she's a holistic. Yeah.

[00:03:01] **Dr. Shefali:** Yes. Fascinating group of people. And it's so amazing because our core message kind of coalesces around the same theme, which is how important connection is. So I'm sure our talk today will circle around that topic.

[00:03:18] **Todd:** Yeah. Um, so where I want to start, Dr. Shefali, is this is your, um, so Parenting Map is going to be your fifth book, or your fourth? Fifth book, yes. So how, um, this is more of a general question, we're going to get much more specific, but how do you describe this book as compared, because I read, um, Most of it, not all of it.

[00:03:39] **Todd:** Um, and it's a lot of the same stuff, but it's presented in a much different way. And I just wanted to hear you share a minute or two about, you know, what drove you to write this book and how is it different from the others?

[00:03:50] **Dr. Shefali:** Well, actually, uh, there's sections of this book that I've never written before.

[00:03:54] **Dr. Shefali:** So maybe you didn't get to the, to the middle of the book, but yes, in, in the initial pages, it [00:04:00] feels like the same, but I've presented it very differently. Why? Because I think my first books were more philosophical. I was introducing this whole idea of conscious parenting. At that time, I was one of the few.

[00:04:12] **Dr. Shefali:** And so it was very new, so I had to lay it out. And this book is very much a hands down, you know, get dirty with it, nitty gritty, step by step. And it's really the how to become a conscious parent. So it's laid out in three stages. The first stage is all about changing the mindset, which is Covered in my other books, but the middle of this book is stuff that I've never talked about before.

[00:04:41] **Dr. Shefali:** It's, uh, how do you break your dysfunctional patterns? And then part three is how do you really connect with your children? But even in that section, even though I've talked about it in, in many, many ways before, I, I really try to break it down with techniques, with practice, practices that people can do on a daily basis.

[00:05:00] **Dr. Shefali:** Every chapter has practices because as you and I know, Parenting is really about the embodiment of and the application of these principles. So my first books were about the principles. This is about its application.

[00:05:16] **Todd:** And that's why, and I actually did get through the second section and there was a lot of new stuff and that's what we want to play with.

[00:05:21] **Todd:** Well, and

[00:05:22] **Cathy:** that's kind of, you know, it's so, I mean, it's so comprehensive. I'm just envisioning you as a writer sitting down and figuring out how to put all this together because it's so, you know, you read a section and you're like, Oh yeah, I got this. And then you like take that section and then break it down, break it down, break it down.

[00:05:39] **Cathy:** And so there's all these different ways to find ourselves in it. Like did, is this part of, because I know you have a conscious parenting, like, um, uh, like it's the training. What do you,

[00:05:52] **Dr. Shefali:** it's an institute. To become coaches and, but in order to become a conscious [00:06:00] parenting coach, as we know, we have to do the work ourselves.

[00:06:03] **Dr. Shefali:** So yes, so I use a lot of this, these principles in training people. That's why this book is more like a training manual, uh, because you're right. It's so heavily nuanced, right? This journey. Every child is so different, you know, and there are bazillion techniques. So this is not so much about laying out every single technique, but it's about how you as a parent need to truly begin to apply consciousness principles so that then your techniques or then your approach is infused with this very consistent mindful approach.

[00:06:40] **Todd:** So, um, as you say, the first section is kind of review of stuff that you've taught us and talked to us for a long time. And I'm just going to throw one of your quotes at you. And I think it's going to be a good way for the audience who's never heard of you to help you help the listener. get in tune of how this is really about us and has very little to do with our children.

[00:07:01] **Todd:** At least that's the story I make up in some of your teachings. And you're also very, uh, personal about it. You talk about your daughter, Maya, quite a bit, and this is one of your quotes. The truth is this, each and every time I've been upset with my daughter, it's been because of my need for control and power, not because of my love for her.

[00:07:18] **Todd:** And I just wonder if you'd be willing to just riff, uh, because I think a lot of us parents Hide behind like, I just love my kid and I want to discipline him. I want him to be a certain way, blah, blah, blah. When in fact, it's really about our own relationship with control and power. Absolutely.

[00:07:32] **Dr. Shefali:** So, you know, when we start this parenting journey, we never imagine all the frustration, the relentless disappointment, the constant heartache and headache that this journey comes to it, right?

[00:07:47] **Dr. Shefali:** So we have a very, A celestial view of ourselves, right? Really pedestalized view of who we will be. Then when these children come out and they [00:08:00] run contrary to our fantasies and our visions, we lose our shit. So now we have dropped from the pedestal, right? And we are in shock because we thought we would be these ever omnipresent giving People, now we've become raging lunatics.

[00:08:17] **Dr. Shefali:** So this drop from, from fame into shame is so heartbreaking to us on some level, and so shocking to our egos, that now we

have to create a reason for it. And the reason Must be these monstrous children, right? So that's how the traditional parenting paradigm has run amok by making parents feel like, no, no, it's not you.

[00:08:42] **Dr. Shefali:** You are, you are amazing. And if you had another child, you would continue to be amazing. It's your bloody child that needs a talking to and a beating up so that you can then feel good about yourself again. So then we invented this whole thing called parental discipline, right? I mean, think about it. With no other adult do we ever talk about adult discipline, or marital discipline, or husband discipline.

[00:09:09] **Dr. Shefali:** We should, but we don't, because we wouldn't dare to. Because it's absurd, and absolutely ludicrous, and filled with, laced with tyranny. But we do it with the parenting process, because the traditional parenting paradigm has intoxicated us with this superior sense of control. So when we drop from that control, then we have to make a reason for it.

[00:09:33] **Dr. Shefali:** The reason is the bad, the bad children. And then we yell, scream, ground and punish. So my approach or this approach of conscious parenting is flipping it, the whole model on its heads. And really challenging the parent to look at how little it has to do with the kid. Oh, and then the other justification is, Oh, I only yelled at them because actually A, they needed fixing, but B it's because [00:10:00] I love them so much.

[00:10:01] **Dr. Shefali:** Right? So we have these justifications. So the conscious parenting model that I talk about in this book, the parenting map is about. Really looking at yourself and realizing and coming to grips with the gargantuan, relentless Nature of your ego and your need for control, because that's what's driving the, the need for, you know, tyranny, supreme power, which then leads us to yell, scream, lose our shit, punish them in all these absurd sort of ways that we wouldn't dare do with another human being.

[00:10:39] **Cathy:** And then the irony of that we want, you know, we want that control, even though people don't always readily admit that word, but yet we want to have this really cute relationship with our kids where we're like, you know, they love us and they love being with us, but I'm going to control you, but still love being with me and love coming to family dinner.

[00:10:57] **Cathy:** And that's kind of the mismatch too, is parents, you know, what kind of relationship is that where I'm going to control you, but you're going to enjoy being with me. You know, that's, that's the confusion.

[00:11:07] **Dr. Shefali:** Right. But not only that, right. Please love me. Please unconditionally accept me. But then we're so flummoxed and literally confused when our kids then shut down from us, withdraw from us, and then lie to us.

[00:11:25] **Dr. Shefali:** And parents come to me and go, you know, my. Kid lies to me and therefore I have to punish them, but then we don't get to the root cause of why the child feels so unsafe. To lie. Lying is really a protective, very intelligent strategy if you're being yelled at for telling the truth, right? Every human then realizes very quickly, Oh, I'll just scheme and flim flam and lie.

[00:11:50] **Dr. Shefali:** So parents want something, but they don't realize how they themselves are constantly underpinning and, uh, you know, uh, [00:12:00] undermining their very desire for connection.

[00:12:03] **Cathy:** Yeah, yeah, like they, we, we basically. We control, and then we can't, even though we don't say this, we want our kids to be afraid enough of us that they won't do something, but then they're afraid of us, so then they lie to us, but then when they lie to us, we're mad at them, and that it's just this cycle of constant disconnection without looking at this person as their own, as being their own person and having their own needs.

[00:12:28] **Cathy:** Todd and I were just having this conversation before you jumped on about why kids lie because that seems to come up all the time. The time. That's the question. And what you just said is that is what parents say to a Shefali is they'll say, but I have to punish them because if I don't, then what am I teaching them?

[00:12:43] **Cathy:** You know, they see the very surfacy level of what just happened versus what is that lie that our kids just told us? What does that mean about how they feel in the home, how they feel as themselves or how they feel with us?

[00:12:58] **Dr. Shefali:** Absolutely. And the revolutionary approach that conscious parenting highlights is that when your kid lies to you, you go to them and say, wow, I've really effed up here.

[00:13:13] **Dr. Shefali:** I have really messed up here because I've created an environment where you don't feel safe to be accepted by me. And I need to get a C grade for parenting right now because I've made you have no option but to become quote unquote a bad player here because you are the best player. You are the most goodest person ever and I have literally now transformed you into a freaking liar.

[00:13:41] **Dr. Shefali:** How did I do that? Now imagine Any one of our parents coming to us and taking that accountability. Wow. Right. Now we have created partnership again. And then the kid goes, no mom, it was me. And the mom goes, no, it was me. But now we are connecting. Now we're partnering [00:14:00] spirit to spirit. Right. And I often tell couples, which is even harder.

[00:14:04] **Dr. Shefali:** That when someone in the couple lies, we want to scream at them, bite the head off. And the more, more revolutionary, compassionate approach would be, wow, you don't feel safe with me. We're not even friends anymore because of my, my contribution to your not feeling like you can come to me with your darkest secrets, right?

[00:14:26] **Cathy:** Yeah. Well, and that's what I love about your work and what, you know, Todd and I get to talk about all the time is how everything you're learning as a parent applies to every single relationship you have, you know, it's universal principles that I feel like we feel most compelled to really tackle as parents because that's that relationship that we, you know, finally feel like we're facing ourselves head on.

[00:14:46] **Cathy:** Um, so I just really appreciate that.

[00:14:49] **Todd:** Um, yeah. I was going to save this till later, but I just need to jump in regarding punishing because it's obviously what a lot of parents want to talk about. And um, step 15 in your book, you say instead of punishment, do this. And one of the things that I, I wrote down when I was reading it, it said connect before you correct, which I think has a world of wisdom inside of it.

[00:15:10] **Todd:** And I, and you, I want you to rip off of it, but I think the idea is connect with your kid before you try to do any type of teaching or anything else, which is so easily forgotten about because when your kid does something, you get pissed and reactive and everything else. So, and then like, for me, it's like, I need to connect with myself first and then the child, and then maybe I can do some teaching or some, some guidance after that.

[00:15:37] **Todd:** Um, I just wonder if you want to share a few thoughts about that. I love

[00:15:42] **Dr. Shefali:** that. So yeah, that's the cornerstone of conscious parenting, which is connection before correction. And like Kathy said, conscious parenting is not about parent child, it is truly about a life philosophy and how you approach humans and your own humanity.

[00:15:59] **Dr. Shefali:** [00:16:00] So, What I teach in this book, The Parenting Map, over and over, I'm helping parents build the muscle to understand that they are not simply raising a child who they need to fix. They are raising a whole human. So that means you have to look at yourself as a whole human. And if you're a whole human, you know that your behaviors are only the surface.

[00:16:26] **Dr. Shefali:** of something deeper within. So if you look at yourself as motivated by deep feelings and you understand that your inner state directs your outer state, then the outer state is not so much something that you need to correct. It's the inner alignment you need to fix, right? So if you want to go on a diet, sure, take out all the cookies and take out all the bread and, and never pass by an ice cream store.

[00:16:52] **Dr. Shefali:** But that's only going to help for two days. You have to truly align with the mission of eating less sugar, correct? In the same way, our children's behavior are just the surface. If you can fully get this philosophy, this is not a strategy. This is like a life philosophy that the behavior. is a mirror of something deeper.

[00:17:13] **Dr. Shefali:** Therefore, I'm connecting. When I say connect, it's not just coochie coo and kiss your kid. Please actually don't do that because after a certain age, that's not what's important. Connect to what? Connect to their wholeness, which means there is something driving the behavior. So connect to that. And if you can understand that in yourself, That every time you actually did eat the 16 cookies, it wasn't that you needed to be reprimanded and slapped on the wrist and your fingers chopped off or your mouth taped.

[00:17:45] **Dr. Shefali:** You needed to be understood for why you were eating the cookies, right? You needed to connect. You needed to feel safe. You needed to feel secure. You were using it as a surrogate. In the same way, every child's behavior is speaking to their inner [00:18:00] misalignment or alignment. Now if you understand that, now you connect to the why underneath the what.

[00:18:07] **Dr. Shefali:** So when you see your kid dawdling on the sofa and not doing homework, don't yell at them for dawdling on the sofa. Understand why they don't want to do the homework and go and create the buy in for doing the homework. The sofa and the TV is the surrogate, the proxy. It's the avoidance tactic to protect them from the, the anxiety they feel in doing the homework.

[00:18:30] **Dr. Shefali:** So I train my parents. And I've done that in this book. Do not focus on the behavior. It is irrelevant. And if you do focus on the

behavior, you are not only missing the point, you are actually creating dysfunctionality and disconnection. But this takes training. Training to look at the wholeness in the individual.

[00:18:52] **Dr. Shefali:** And then

[00:18:53] **Cathy:** that training that, you know, you're looking at the wholeness in the, in, in your child and then remembering the wholeness in you and why you do things because like my issue, like the, the chapter that Todd and I were discussing so much this morning was about catching your own ego. Um, and you know, we're figuring out what we, what we are, like how to identify ourselves and everything I do, I tend to be a fixer and Um, you know, I don't identify with every piece of it because I'm not afraid of conflict.

[00:19:23] **Cathy:** I'm not worried about bringing things up. You know, I can talk through something, but my, all my stuff is from my childhood because all I wanted as a kid was all those things that you said, like, see why I do this, understand why I feel this way. And my parents were lovely. But they weren't always like, now what does Kathy think?

[00:19:41] **Cathy:** It was more like, what does the family do? What does the family do? So then I'm bringing all my stuff from childhood to my kids, but sometimes going over the top with the enabling of like, let's just listen to what they have to say. Well, that made sense to me. So let's move on. And I, there's this, you know, Todd is more of, [00:20:00] you know, he's more of like, let's stop here and, you know, dig deeper into this because a lot of it, I am just trying to.

[00:20:08] **Cathy:** You know, understand them, but then not necessarily, I don't know, Todd, you're the one watching me parent more. Like, what are you, what am I doing in that moment that you see?

[00:20:18] **Todd:** Um, well, first of all, I like this framework. I love frameworks. And what you did in this section, Shefali, is catch your ego. And just for the listeners, because they haven't read Shefali's book, she has one, two, three, four, five different kinds.

[00:20:31] **Todd:** Fighters, fixers, fainters.

[00:20:36] **Cathy:** Fainters. Fainters. Fainters.

[00:20:37] **Todd:** Fainters. Not faint. Fainters, sorry. Freezers and Fleers. So Kathy, well Kathy and I played this morning, and she's like, well what do you think I am? I'm like, you're a fixer, for sure. Well, and I

[00:20:48] **Cathy:** kind of know that, but I'm just

[00:20:49] **Todd:** curious if you see it. And just for the audience, what this means, and this comes directly from Shefali's book, um, fixers, Um, are worthy when others see them as the good one.

[00:21:01] **Todd:** Please and rescue others is my vehicle for gaining power. I am loved most when I'm fixing other people's problems. I need to be needed because it helps me feel significant. So before Shefali, you answer, I just want to say that's what happens when Kathy is at, um, in a place of reactivity. Most of the time, Kathy is a wonderful mom that has is conscious of her ego and not acting from the ego.

[00:21:22] **Todd:** But when She does. And we'll talk about my problems in a second, but when she does, when she gets scared, that's where she goes. So anyways, wherever you want to go with that, Shivali.

[00:21:32] **Dr. Shefali:** Right. So I helped parents in this book, kind of, you know, you can't stereotype people, but for the most part, we fall into one of these categories based on our survival techniques from childhood, you know, so the fighters.

[00:21:47] **Dr. Shefali:** operate out of anger and they're quick to anger. I said, no, uh, why did you do that? You know, and more masculine energy kind of exploding, even if it's a minor explosion. You know, I always used to [00:22:00] tell my child's father that even though you're just saying it in such a soft way to the child, it's a cut off the head, you know, it's really harsh.

[00:22:08] **Dr. Shefali:** So snappy, snippy. That energy is the fighter energy. The, the fixer is Kathy and me with the typical good girls come from this need to kind of rescue, enable, and then we over enable, overdo it. And that comes from a very anxious place. Because we cannot tolerate anyone being unhappy or unhappy with us. Oh my goodness, unhappy with us?

[00:22:30] **Dr. Shefali:** Forget it, right? Um, then come the feiners, F E I G N E R S, which is coming from this need for attention. So attention seeking, which is how does it look? You know, as long as it looks okay. So, A lot of, uh, very traditional parents care about what the neighbors think, care about what the

society thinks, care about what their Facebook audience thinks, and everything is kind of geared for that, but we're not taking care of the child's individual needs.

[00:22:57] **Dr. Shefali:** It's more about the parent's desire to be seen as a particular way. And then we have the freezers and the fleers, and I put them together because they come from more trauma places. Um, And, you know, there's a part in all of us that kind of freezes, but the, the typical freezer parent is one who will kind of avoid.

[00:23:16] **Dr. Shefali:** So they come from a place of avoidance and the fleer comes from a place of abandonment. So depending on the degree of trauma, You know, we, we, we will check out to a greater degree than the other and it's a quick way and within each category, the other subcategories so that you can begin to really realize, wow, I do this as a default pattern and I must check in with the underlying feeling.

[00:23:41] **Dr. Shefali:** Of what is arising before I step into action, because the action again is the behavior, and that's the pattern, but what's happening beneath, and it's typically some sort of loss of control, right? All of it impinges upon this loss of control. So Todd, what, what would be your style? Do

[00:23:59] **Todd:** you want to take a [00:24:00] guess or no?

[00:24:00] **Todd:** I mean, I know you don't know me that well, but

[00:24:03] **Dr. Shefali:** Maybe a little bit of first a freeze and then more of a, of a snappy snippy.

[00:24:09] **Todd:** Uh, yeah, more snappy snippy, but I totally identified with the freezers and I'll give you a,

[00:24:15] **Cathy:** you were right. Yeah.

[00:24:18] **Todd:** And I'll give you a real world example that happened yesterday morning in our household, which is always fun to hear us talk about our problems.

[00:24:24] **Todd:** Um, but this is what it is for the freezer, according to Shefali and I totally identified with it. In order for a freezer, uh, you need to get emotionally involved with others. If I do, I'll experience pain. So let me just

remove myself from that possibility. Conflict is painful and could lead to abandonment.

[00:24:41] **Todd:** Um, and as you said, there's subcategories, and I found myself in the subcategory of half assed. So the half assed freezer means vulnerable, it requires vulnerability, and I don't want to be vulnerable. I'm afraid of being connected to others. I reject any, um, uh, I check myself before others, oh, I, I basically, instead of, um, getting attacked, I just remove myself that way.

[00:25:03] **Todd:** I can't. Nobody needs to count on me. And it's safer to watch from the sidelines than to jump in. So yesterday morning, our 18 year old daughter came home Saturday night, a little bit later than she usually does. I'm on my computer in my office. And I said to Kathy, actually that morning. This kid showed up a little bit later than she's supposed to, right?

[00:25:23] **Todd:** And Kathy's like, as the fixer, I'll talk to her. And I didn't say this, but in my, my consciousness, I'm like, great. Now I don't have to talk to her. So the next morning, we're like, Kathy's like, oh, you got on at this time instead of that time. And I'm typing on my computer. I'm not even in the room. Be thanking Kathy because she's willing to have this.

[00:25:44] **Todd:** Uncomfortable conversation. And you're right. When you talk about trauma, I got some trauma from my childhood with my parents fighting and a lot of some domestic abuse and conflict is for my nervous system. So it's just safer for me to stay on my computer and let Kathy do all the [00:26:00] hard work. So that's who I am when I'm in, I'm not, I'm not always there, but when I'm scared, that's where I go.

[00:26:06] **Dr. Shefali:** Yes, and we'll be surprised to realize how many men, and even though they're fully masculine in their power, they resort to, to checking out, you know, their first mode is to check out. You would think they would jump into the fire, but they don't. And typically freezers and fixers make a great combo for the very reason you just said.

[00:26:30] **Dr. Shefali:** Uh, and many homes have the fixer mom, and I know I'm being stereotypical, but I see it over and over again, where the mom is the one who's just jumping in and then, then further encouraging the, the freezer, right? And further emasculating them into the part, into the dynamic with the home. And then typically, if the, The one of them becomes the fighter and explodes, uh, then, you know, because one is bearing that brunt.

[00:26:58] **Dr. Shefali:** They're holding that energy too much, and then they can't, so they explode. So all of these ways become set patterns in our homes, and we're working on robot mode. We're working on automatic mode, and we don't even realize how we then Rob our children of their own inner governance and their own inner resilience, because we're jumping in, we're fixing.

[00:27:24] **Dr. Shefali:** And then another combo I see is, of course, very typical combo is the fighter and the fixer, right? So one, typically the male is more the fighter. And then the, the female feels the need to even more clean it up, rescue, save the situation. And it creates these unhealthy patterns and it's burdensome for everybody.

[00:27:42] **Dr. Shefali:** No one wants to be any of these patterns. But these are patterns that we're bringing into the dynamic from our childhood. And, you know, if you, if you notice in this, in this section. I draw the loops out. I show each loop, kind of give a visual representation because it's one [00:28:00] thing to hear someone say what they are, but it's another thing to identify it in yourself.

[00:28:05] **Dr. Shefali:** Yeah,

[00:28:06] **Todd:** that takes work to see it in yourself. I could see everybody else's problems. It's just really hard for me to see my own good, sweetie. Well, and

[00:28:11] **Cathy:** I, that's the thing is that you see how this impacts. The family, the relationship, like, you know, I'm somebody who is, you know, the girls come home and even if they don't say anything, I can feel something's going on.

[00:28:22] **Cathy:** And I'm not always like on hyperdrive to fix it. Sometimes I like staying out of it, but I can feel it. And so, and if I do bring it up to Todd, he's like, ah, so I can also, he can, even though he would never use these words. He sometimes I feel like perceives me as being neurotic about things because he's like, ah, stay out of that.

[00:28:39] **Cathy:** You don't need to do that. You know? And so he becomes the solid rock of the family that never gets involved in these things. And I'm the one feeling all these things help, you know, supporting the girls when they ask for it. So then, and then the same thing with the, I, I do too. Shefali, I work with a lot of.

[00:28:52] **Cathy:** Fixer, fighter, um, you know, families as well. And then the fixer mom, again, we're generalizing, stereotyping, but it tends to be, she almost has like this secret relationship with the kids where they're like, let's just not bother dad and let's just pretend things are okay. And then the dad gets to kind of keep doing the things he's doing and there's like such a separation.

[00:29:11] **Cathy:** So, you know, speak to that too, how like these, these dynamics can really change the way the family operates a hundred

[00:29:17] **Dr. Shefali:** percent. Right? So when we're not aware of what we're doing, we're just filling in the psychic holes, so to speak, right? We're just, you know, you both didn't decide, oh, I'll be the freezer because you're hyper fixer.

[00:29:31] **Dr. Shefali:** It's just, you fall into it, but then you perpetuate it, right? Then you burst, like I said before, you explode because it becomes too much. So then you begin stealth patterns, right? Of, of creating these alliances and these. unhealthy trysts, because you have to to keep it going. So then to break out of it gets really hard, but It's easy.

[00:29:54] **Dr. Shefali:** It's much easier to break out of it than to explode and deal with the fallout, you know, so this [00:30:00] book is going to help people to break out of it. So to break out of it, it would really mean to a own one's own pattern. So in my family, I was always jumping in between my child and her father. And, and helping my child not get into trouble, cleaning it up.

[00:30:16] **Dr. Shefali:** But I realized what I was doing was, was unhealthy for me because I'm the keeper of secrets. Unhealthy for her and unhealthy for him because I was disconnecting him from her. So I had to really say, Hey, you guys, now it's on you. But that took a lot of courage to step out of those dynamics and to let people deal with themselves.

[00:30:36] **Dr. Shefali:** You know, so maybe for you, Cathy, once in a while, you can say, Hey, Todd, why don't you jump into the fire? Right? Why don't you handle this one? This is my week. Now it's your week, especially as the kids grow older so that we each get a chance to equalize that dynamic. But then Kathy, you would need to really step out because then he, then he needs to do it his way.

[00:30:59] **Dr. Shefali:** And typically the ones who are in control, aka the fixers. Don't like to hand over the control, right? We have a vision for how it should look, and that's where we overburden ourselves. Let them, this was so hard for me, because quote unquote, I'm the conscious parent, very hard for me

to let go my daughter to the other parent, because I could see him doing it in a clumsy way, or like, oh my god, you don't, you don't say that, but I had to allow it, because otherwise I would burn out, and it wasn't healthy

[00:31:28] **Todd:** anyway.

[00:31:29] **Todd:** Well, one of my best examples is Kathy sometimes goes to, uh, we have a, Aunt Peg has a place in Galena. So Kathy goes to Galena, which is two and a half hours away for a few days to write or do some version of self care. And I'm always like pushing her out because she comes home recharged because Kathy gets drained from the day to day experience of being a mom and life and all that.

[00:31:52] **Todd:** But another benefit aside from her coming home recharged is that she's not there. And what I mean by that is. [00:32:00] I know that I have co created a situation when my daughters are really struggling, they're going to go to Kathy first. I would love to blame Kathy for it. No, I take full responsibility that this is the dynamic that I have co created with my daughters.

[00:32:13] **Todd:** But when she's not there, it's wonderful because there's no choice. And then they come to me. In a place of reactivity about something that happened in school. Like I'm the guy and all of a sudden I'm like, wow, this feels really good that I'm the guy. The only way for that to happen is if Kathy not the only way.

[00:32:31] **Todd:** No, that's the way that's created now. The best way for that to happen is if Kathy's not there. So I appreciate that, that share for sure.

[00:32:37] **Cathy:** Uh, Ali, do you? Yes. Do you talk to, do you tell Maya, like does she understand your, um, your patterns, like are you super open about, well I'm doing this, like how much, how much does Maya care about this conscious parenting model, like how, like does she understand you from that deep level and the way that her dad operates and the way that you operate, like how much do you talk about it in this clinical way with her?

[00:33:01] **Dr. Shefali:** You know, it's so surprising, but not that I actually don't need to talk about it. She'll tell me, Mom, you're such a pushover, Mom. I remember when she was as young as five or six, whispering to her friend. I feel embarrassed, but I'm just going to say it. Telling her friend, wait, wait. My mom is saying no right now, but we just have to keep asking her and then she's going to say yes.

[00:33:24] **Dr. Shefali:** So my daughter figured me out like, Oh, I'm such a pleaser and I'm such an enabler that you just have to beat her down. Um, and her father's not right. The good qualities of her father was that he, once he said he meant that, but there was no such thing with me. So Maya knows, I don't have to clinically say, but she all, but clinically I have talked to her about.

[00:33:45] **Dr. Shefali:** Do you know, I, you know, and again, this is my ego, like Maya, do you realize how lucky you are that you've never been, never been punched, never been grounded. You know, she had no curfew growing up because [00:34:00] I, I had a whole different philosophy, philosophy, we can talk about it and it did work. But, um, She had such an easygoing, in many ways I was so easygoing because again, I had healed so much of my own.

[00:34:12] **Dr. Shefali:** I know I'm sounding like I'm tooting my own horn, but it's true. I mean, I've written five books. I had to heal myself through these books. But she'll also very gladly come on your show and tell you how I pushed her into things that she didn't want to do. And I had to recently declare a public apology in front of friends and say, I'm so sorry.

[00:34:31] **Dr. Shefali:** I was so wicked. I sent you to a basketball game and you didn't want to go. So I, I've done evil things according to her. But, um, I think what what's happened is that through this journey of so much healing that I really. See the bullshit that culture has put on the parenting journey and the parent, and I have liberated myself from it.

[00:34:53] **Dr. Shefali:** So I don't buy into a lot of what parents feel stressed about. I've let it go. I let it go by the time she was four or five. So, Because I have let go of these cultural institutions that many parents hold on their shoulders as truth, as the Holy Grail. I have burned it. So I don't have that burden on my shoulders.

[00:35:15] **Dr. Shefali:** Therefore, I'm super chill, right? I'm easygoing. But if I was carrying the burdens that many parents carry, I would be totally exactly in the shithole of the cesspool of parenting, yelling, screaming, putting all my garbage on her. So therefore, I write these books to help other parents also liberate themselves from the burdens that culture has put on the parent.

[00:35:43] **Dr. Shefali:** You know, I call it the parenting industrial complex. The parent has been screwed with false ideas about how to raise this perfect child and the super uber. You know, successful being. That is a lie. And as long as we hold that as [00:36:00] the holy grail, we will be losing our shit. Everything our

kid does that is anti perfection will feel like failure, which means we have to scream and yell.

[00:36:11] **Dr. Shefali:** And we will create dysfunctionality. So my greatest goal in this is not just to raise empowered children, but to liberate parents from the lies. That culture has sold the parent. The parent is the perfect bond for all things consumeristic, all things idealistic. You know, such pressure on us. We have to raise children who speak multiple languages, who know how to ski backwards, who go volunteer in six world countries, who, you know, what the hell?

[00:36:43] **Dr. Shefali:** You know, we, we think we have to raise these magnificent beings. No, I, I remind parents, you are raising an ordinary. Human being. Now start doing that. And the minute you do that well, You're done. So my goal as a parent was to raise an ordinary human being. I think I've done a great job

[00:37:02] **Cathy:** at that. Yeah. Yeah.

[00:37:03] **Cathy:** Like everything you're saying, like we can't have connection or relationship inside of the paradigm that has been created for parents, you know, that lives in our mind, that lives in our trauma, that lives in our culture, that we can't have what we want inside that paradigm. So like you said, you have to burn it down or start to take it down brick by brick, because Shivali, this is like a perfect example of.

[00:37:24] **Cathy:** You know, that example that Todd just said about, you know, she came home late. So we've had, we're very similar to you in this way. Our daughters have had a lot of freedom in their life in every way. Be in what you want, do this, you know, grades are your thing. And I agree with you. It's worked out really well.

[00:37:40] **Cathy:** And then, but then sometimes we get stuck in things like, you know, I said to. You know, my daughter, what time, what time will you be home? Oh, I'll be home around this time. Okay. So then when she's not, I'm like, wait a second, you weren't home at that time. And then I get stuck in the, like, and then I said to Todd this morning, like, what is it about that time?

[00:37:55] **Cathy:** Because all of a sudden I'm in conflict with her when really I let her decide [00:38:00] that time anyway. But we, there's this, I still, I just see how it just creeps up again. Even if you think for me, at least, you know, I think,

oh, I've let go of these paradigms, but then I still find myself being like, I have to have control in this area.

[00:38:14] **Cathy:** I have to let her know. And so that's the thing. It comes up again and again,

[00:38:18] **Dr. Shefali:** don't you think? It comes up again and again. So, you know, it's like I let my daughter choose her classes and then she went and changed one of them and didn't tell me. So then again, I was just like, I didn't say a word, but I noticed myself going, hello, just because I give you freedom, you just cannot just run away with this.

[00:38:36] **Dr. Shefali:** I'm still the queen, right? It's that. This, this, but this parenting paradigm has been ingrained in us, which is, but it really comes from our inner child, which says, hello, I think I'm the parent and I'm supposed to be given notice. Like, why didn't you ask my permission to be 10 minutes late? Right. We still want this parental control, which actually sounds grown up, but it comes from a very childish place because after 18 years old, what are you even asking her?

[00:39:05] **Dr. Shefali:** Right. Months she's going to be away at college, you won't even know what she's doing or she's already at college. So what are we really asking? It's an illusion of control. It is. I agree. Before

[00:39:18] **Cathy:** you go there, because I know where Todd's going to go. No, you don't. I don't. Well, what I, the thing that's interesting about that is What am I teaching in my home that when she's not living here, she's not going to live that like it's, it's such a game of make this look good to me.

[00:39:34] **Cathy:** Cause I'm not even, it's not about putting it on Instagram for other people are talking about it here. It's about make this feel right to me, kid. But then when you're at school, do whatever you want. And so it really is. feel better. So I'm sorry, Todd, but I just

[00:39:47] **Todd:** needed to like, I agree with everything everybody's saying.

[00:39:49] **Todd:** I'm going to push back a little bit though, because let's just say curfew. Like that's easier for us all to understand. I agree. And Kathy and I sometimes get accused of permissive parenting, which I don't think that we're permissive [00:40:00] parents. I'm guessing Chapala, you probably have been accused of the same thing.

[00:40:03] **Todd:** And I think that we're doing the way we are doing it works for us. May not work for everybody else, but it works for us. But isn't there something too that kids want? Boundaries and guardrails. And I feel like that is a little bit in conflict with what we're sharing right now, because although the kid wants to be able to stay out all night, there's a part of them that wants to know that their parents give a crap of what time they show up.

[00:40:26] **Todd:** And I just wonder how those two ideas intersect.

[00:40:30] **Dr. Shefali:** Yeah, actually kids don't stay out all night. I gave my daughter no boundary and they actually come home. I, she's never come home. I mean, after she turned 16, it was a dead story, but till 16, they were always home by 12 because all other parents are also talking about the same thing with their kids.

[00:40:47] **Dr. Shefali:** So instead of giving a curfew, which locks you in, you just tell them, okay, no later than this, you know, you just say within this hour, you know, just make it loose. And if they do come home late. They're not smoking pot or running a crime ring. They're just having fun. So again, if you look at the wholeness, you go, okay, now you're going to suffer tomorrow.

[00:41:07] **Dr. Shefali:** Don't you be crying to me, telling me you have a headache and getting up late for school and the kid will be like, I won't, I'll be up on time. I'll show you. So it works out. I think, again, this idea of curfew is, uh, is something we've been taught to do. It's not something that we need to do. And I encourage parents to try it out.

[00:41:26] **Dr. Shefali:** You know, just tell your kids, hey, I just hope you come home between the hours of 10 and 11, if they're, if they're in seventh grade and between this and this, if they're Kids know they're not idiots. They feel tired. They come home. They don't want to be out. And again, if your home is comfortable, my daughters always tell me, Oh my goodness, I'm so glad I'm back home.

[00:41:46] **Dr. Shefali:** Oh, I couldn't take it anymore. I couldn't take my friends anymore. They all annoying me. Thank goodness I'm back in my bed. If they love being home, why would they love staying out? Right? So again, if you make your home someplace where they are [00:42:00] completely free. To be themselves, they will come home. This is again about trusting human nature.

[00:42:07] **Dr. Shefali:** Human nature comes back home. They want to come back home. They will not stay out all night if your home is beautiful and they

can be with their friends at home, perhaps. You know, it's the, it's the over controlling parent who then creates this unmitigated desire for freedom in their kid. That kid wants to stay out late at night, not the kid who's the parent who's permissive.

[00:42:31] **Dr. Shefali:** Yeah, the controlling parent creates that.

[00:42:34] **Todd:** Yeah, I, I agree. And I, I'm so glad you shared that is the idea of keeping your home safe. And what does that mean? That means that they're not going to be judged the minute they walk in the door. So I think that's really important. But I want to pivot because I don't, I know we're gonna run out of time and I want to make sure I get this in.

[00:42:48] **Todd:** And you also do a good job of explaining. There's no encapsulation of anything but in Step 12, I don't know if it's chapter 12, but step 12 is to learn kids psyche. Okay, and you have five different I don't know how many there are, but there's a handful of different types of kids we have. And obviously it's not a one size fits all, there's variables, there's, there's fluidity between these types, but I'm worried that you have been looking at my family through a hidden camera based upon some of these frameworks that you share.

[00:43:20] **Todd:** So the first one. No, I

[00:43:22] **Cathy:** did a

[00:43:22] **Dr. Shefali:** census. I went through all my best friends and I took all their kids and we created the typecast and there were, it's just. It's not too many of them. Most kids fall in that range. So, yeah, go ahead.

[00:43:35] **Todd:** So I have one kid who I think, and I think she would agree, identifies as the overdoer, the over giver, and the over pleaser.

[00:43:44] **Todd:** And what I love about this, and Kathy might get mad because I'm Sharing this because I want to read a paragraph that you wrote because I literally just shared it with my daughter who I identify as an overdoer and overshare and overpleaser.

[00:43:57] **Cathy:** What I will say is she identifies as well. Now that [00:44:00] she's much older, she sees her patterns.

[00:44:02] **Cathy:** She sees how she relates to her siblings. Like it's to your point, they figure themselves out and she's realizing the, that that only takes you so far. So

[00:44:10] **Todd:** this was so powerful. I had to stop what I was doing and I sent her a video text and I said, cause you know her, you, you, we've had dinner together. And I said, daughter, we're interviewing Shefali in an hour and she wrote this part of the book and she talks about the over pleaser and all that.

[00:44:27] **Todd:** And I read this to her from your book in a video message and said this, you are an extremely giving being who wants nothing more than to make others happy. This is your nature. This can be taken advantage of by others. If you aren't. Uh, Protective of your heart. You need to realize that unless you please your, please and love yourself first, you will neglect yourself.

[00:44:49] **Todd:** You don't have to be perfect for others to love you. You are allowed to be ordinary and even to fail. You don't have to please others all the time. You'll meet many who are not as caring as you. You are a giver and will encounter many others who will keep on taking from you. You need to discern between who is worthy and who isn't.

[00:45:08] **Todd:** If you learn to open your giving heart to the right people. It will be your superpower. The most important person in your life is you. Always remember that. You come first. Listening to yourself and honoring your own truth is paramount. And that like just hit me in the, in the gut and the heart because I feel like if I can give my daughter any wisdom, you encapsulate it in that paragraph.

[00:45:30] **Todd:** And sometimes Kathy's like, well, just tell her what, like, I need somebody to feed this to me so that I can share it. Like I'm not wise enough. To encapsulate it in a nice tight paragraph like that. So I just want to like, honestly say, thank you for sharing that with me. And I think my daughter is going to say thank you too.

[00:45:49] **Todd:** And I did that

[00:45:50] **Dr. Shefali:** for every type of kid for the anxious exploder, the recluse kid, the shy, the introvert kid. I, what, what that is saying is that I'm helping parents [00:46:00] realize that don't change your kid from their authentic template. See the superpower in that, you know? I often say, you know, my emoji for my daughter in the phone is a porcupine.

[00:46:14] **Dr. Shefali:** Maya has been a porcupine since she was born, but it's, she's so beautiful. She's cute. And then she's bristly and she's tough. And, and it's, it also covers a very soft heart, but boy, is she a porcupine. So, um, but, but I found the beauty of her and I see how she's my teacher and I. You know, honor and celebrate that.

[00:46:35] **Dr. Shefali:** And similarly, instead of making her, you know, a little pigeon in my hands, which I would have wanted or dreamed about, I began to honor who she was. And I'm helping parents in this book and in that stage to identify the nature of your child. And then zone in on their superpower. Don't make them someone they're not.

[00:46:57] **Dr. Shefali:** Help them become more of who they are. Because when they are easy with who they are, then they actually will adapt to other situations and other ways of being. But if you're constantly telling them that who they are is wrong, then they're like, okay, then they're in fight or flight mode. Instead, celebrate who they are.

[00:47:14] **Dr. Shefali:** So with each of the types, I give A little saying that they can say to themselves or say to their children and bestow their children with this gift of seeing them for their authentic nature. Yeah.

[00:47:26] **Cathy:** And just, you know, we have, uh, another one of my daughters is more like Maya and she and my other daughter that Todd is referring to.

[00:47:33] **Cathy:** They're so interesting together because they're very, very close, but my older daughter will sometimes try and protect everybody. From my other daughter's boldness and like the way she just says what she thinks and does what she wants and there's like they even have and what I what Todd and I were talking about this morning is as parents sometimes you can over identify with one where you're like, but this one's so easygoing.

[00:47:53] **Cathy:** Why can't you be easygoing like this one and you, you know, we sometimes are like so comfortable with the [00:48:00] overdoer. That we don't notice how the one who's a little more rebellious has this really strong presence where we don't worry about her when she goes out in the world. Like, I don't think about that she, you know, I mean, she's human, she could be taken advantage of, but she's got a really strong sense of self.

[00:48:14] **Cathy:** So, as parents, we have to watch that too, that we don't over identify with one of these

[00:48:19] **Dr. Shefali:** types. Right, and the overdoer, over pleaser is the love. Every parent wants that kid, like, come serve me. But in doing that, we can create this comparison with other siblings. So we have to be very careful. Again, culture likes the over giving girl, especially.

[00:48:36] **Dr. Shefali:** So we have to be very careful that we don't over Uh, honor that because then that person feels they have to do it to the point of self sacrifice, right? So, so we have to honor all parts and that daughter needs to learn from the porcupine daughter and the porcupine daughter needs to learn from that. So, and I always say I'm not here to change Maya's nature.

[00:48:56] **Dr. Shefali:** Maya will learn from culture, from society, from her friends. I'm here to honor. And I think that's what a safe home is, where we can honor their true nature, where they can be exactly who they are at home. But see, parents are always just focusing on the behavior, the behavior, the behavior. And that's where we get into a rut.

[00:49:16] **Dr. Shefali:** And the more we focus on the negative behavior, we can, the three of us can promise it grows. The negative behavior grows, but if you can go beneath the negative behavior to understand why the child is behaving like that and address that, then the negative behavior is no longer negative behavior. You know, so if you can understand your kid coming home late and missing curfew as, oh wow, you're having a great time.

[00:49:42] **Dr. Shefali:** I get it. Listen, let's talk about it. If you're having such a good time, I want you to have such a good time. Can we find a way that you can text me, that you can just ask me, that you can let me know? Then you see the curfew is not the focus and the behavior is not the focus and therefore you're not creating disconnection.

[00:49:58] **Dr. Shefali:** So you always find [00:50:00] a way to connect to who your child is.

[00:50:03] **Cathy:** Your work is so beautiful, Shefali.

[00:50:05] **Todd:** for doing what you do. The name of the book is The Parenting Map. The name of the summit is Parenting Mastery 2023. You can buy the book or sign up for the summit just by clicking in the show notes underneath this podcast.

[00:50:20] **Todd:** And Shefali is going to be with Team Zen on Friday. So if you're listening to this in real time, we're recording this on February 13th, and

you want to have a Q and A with Shefali, she's going to be, she's been, um, kind enough to, uh, support our Team Zen subscribers. So hopefully you will. And that's this Friday, the 17th.

[00:50:38] **Todd:** This Friday, the 17th. So just, uh, sign up for Team Zen in the link below. Any closing thoughts, Shefali? No, thank

[00:50:46] **Dr. Shefali:** you guys for always supporting me. You're the best. I adore being with you. Thank you so much. And yeah, sign up for the free summit. That's the big jewel that I'm offering to honor the release of this book.

[00:50:58] **Dr. Shefali:** Yeah.

[00:50:59] **Todd:** And we will see you soon. Thank you so much, Shefali.

[00:51:04] **Dr. Shefali:** Thank you, guys.

[00:51:06]