

MERYL: Welcome back everybody to the Rebel Nutritionist podcast. So excited that we're doing it in person today, Jessica. I've known Jessica for quite a while. She's participated in many of our events. And so very excited to bring her on because I think the topic is timely and appropriate.

It's always timely, but really, I think, especially now so Jessica is a certified parent coach and is the founder of Ocean Waves Parenting. Welcome.

JESSICA: Thank you so much for inviting me to be here. I'm so happy to be in your beautiful space. Oh, thank you.

MERYL: Thank you. We're happy to have you. So tell us, What is a parent coach?

JESSICA: So I get that question of a lot and more so **why parent coaching as opposed to therapy**, right? So **parent coaching looks specifically at the future goals you want to attain,, what you'd like your relationship to be like with your family**. And **Usually when parents, when parents seek out a parent coach, I feel like they're at the end of their ropes. I keep yelling all the time, or I sound like my mom or my child is so stubborn** or my child is this or that. And they're. **They're looking for strategies and ways to move forward**, whereas a lot of times in therapy, it's looking backwards, right? How to heal. Yeah, to move forward. And there is some of that there is some crossover because we look at your own parent, how you were parenting, right?

And how those styles affect your parenting. But more so we're, we're looking to get you forward. We're looking to get you towards your goals. Not so much different than a nutritionist or a health coach. Yeah. What goals do you want to achieve in the future and how do we get there?

MERYL: That's amazing. So how did you get into this?

JESSICA: So my background is in education. Okay. However when I started out in school, I wanted to be a psychology major. And my own parents said to me you're going to have to go on for your master's, and we're not paying for that. I feel like they kind of scared me a little into taking education classes.

And I loved, I loved it. I love teaching. But I always felt like something was missing. I stopped teaching when my oldest daughter was born and I always, I always wanted to go back into something, but you know, with so many of our lives, it just felt like there was, it was never the right time to go back into it.

And then I'm a firm believer in science and I started seeing people that I knew would post parent coach. I just did this training. And then during the summer of COVID, I worked at a sleepaway camp and we were on lockdown. No, we weren't allowed to go out or in or anything. So I had a lot of time to do some research then.

And I took some time to look into this parent coaching. I was like, Hmm, this, this looks like something I can really get behind. It's, it deals with. My passion for psychology and how the mind works and my love for being a mom. Yeah. So I kind of just blend and feel like it's a good blend of the two.

MERYL: You know, I love that because it's, it's like the work that I get to do on path, right? It's your passion. You're living out your passion. And I think when you get to live out your passion, it's not work. Right? Absolutely. It's like, wow, I am so excited to be able to help other people in a way that Where there really isn't much out there and, and I love the idea of what you said, well, yeah, it's a combination of going back, but moving forward.

And I think, again, it's important it's funny, I've, I've been through so many years of therapy and I'm very open about it because I think we all need to work on ourselves, right? We come with a lot of baggage, right?

JESSICA: And there's so much positive material out there about building your body and taking care of your body.

But. If you don't take care of your emotions and your mind, what good is your body?

MERYL: Well, and I feel like, absolutely, like 110% and I feel like that really hasn't come into the forefront. It was so muted and it was so dismissed for so long. And I think finally, maybe, maybe COVID did it. Maybe that is the one good thing that came out of COVID is that we started to pay attention.

Although I still think we missed the boat terribly on so much of that. Yeah. I mean, when I say we come with baggage, right? Like our stories that were told, look, I had a, what I thought was an amazing childhood, right? And I have amazing parents, but look, we still have stuff that their parents put onto them.

And right where we living those generations of things that actually affect our DNA. Absolutely. And so as we learn, right, **I remember saying, well, there are certain things that I didn't want to repeat as a parent.**

You know, there wasn't a lot of communication in my family going on when we were young. And now it's like, I'm probably too much the other way around. What are you doing? You know, but I do think that that stuff is so important. So I'm so glad you're doing that stuff.

JESSICA: So I actually, it's interesting because I had to go through the program myself as to be coached before I went on to the coaching portion of it.

And like you, I went with, I had a good childhood, and you know what? I'm doing a good job with my kids. And then... You start unpacking stuff that you didn't even realize was there and you're like, Oh my gosh, I can't believe what I did to my child. **So just a perfect example, labeling, we do a whole a whole section on labeling, what it means to label somebody.**

And for so many years, I had said that. My daughter was shy. She was shy. Yeah. Oh, she's just sure. And one day she said to me let me know. I'm really not shy. I just like to sit back

and take it in for a while. And then I come to the section on labeling. And then I feel like I spent the next week crying in the shower.

You don't, you don't realize the impact and not just parenting, I have, I feel very, very strongly about teachers too, because they have such an impact on children, the words, the words you choose and how you choose to use them plays such an important role.

Absolutely. In everything, right?

MERYL: We talk about it with our clients, right? How do you speak to yourself?

JESSICA: And here's the thing. Our brain is triggered. By the negative. Yeah. You hold on to the negative so much more than the positive.

MERYL: Yeah. So true. Yeah. So true. So this is going to be so much fun. And you and I are like, yeah, we didn't even get started.

So I have so much that I just want to talk about, but you know, it was interesting. I saw a post from Andrew Huberman, right? He does all this neuroscience stuff, big podcaster guy. I love listening to him because he's very much about the science, but they did a study on children. And they did this study about reinforcement, right?

So when you say to a child, oh, you're so smart and oh, you're so good at this and whatever. And then they did this, so that was 1 group positive saying about, their ability, right? They're intelligent, but they were smart that they. And then they had another group who were praised for effort. Oh, you put the hard work in. Such great effort. More about that.

JESSICA: **They're labeling their actions.**

MERYL: Yes, the action, not their personality character trait. And what they found was that the kids who had praise for the effort and for the actions did way better on the testing and whatever they had them doing than the kids who were labeled as intelligent and you know, Oh, you're so smart.

You're so good at it. So it just goes to show that the words matter.

JESSICA: So I had a client once and he was repeatedly calling his child lazy and I was trying to show him the power of his words. And he had a hard time understanding that Just saying that it's, that's not really going to make him that way. And I put it in the most simplistic terms that I could.

When your child is born, they're a blank slate. They're nothing. They don't know anything about the world. And then you start calling them. Hi, Johnny. Hi, Johnny. Hi, Johnny. And then they learn that they're Johnny. So what's the difference if you repeatedly say, my child is, you're lazy, you're lazy, all of a sudden they're lazy.

That's who they become.

MERYL: Yeah. I always feel like everybody needs, whether you are in crisis with your, and I always say **prevention is key**, right? Prevention is key in health. Prevention is key in this kind

of, like, It would be so great if, if every parent went through a course on coaching their children at the very beginning, right?

Like you, you don't have a manual of how to, of how to be a parent, right? And, and wouldn't it be great proactively if we could say, well, yeah, **the words that you're going to use on that the words matter and how you say that matters and how much more well adjusted and healthy our kids would be mentally and emotionally if we did that**, right?

It would be that

JESSICA: that is our whole goal of of. That, I feel like that the, so Jai Institute is where I got my coaching certificate from, and that's their mission. Our mission is, is that to work from the bottom up with that length.

That's amazing. Yeah.

And it's a group founded by moms and parents that it's just, it's an amazing That's great. It's an amazing institute. They have an amazing mission.

MERYL: Yeah. And that's what it is. It's grassroots, right?

It's starting with the people that care the most and the parents, and that's amazing.

So, so your practice is fairly new. Yes. So for people who really have no idea what a parent coach is, right, like you just mentioned what you're doing, but **what is the process that you're using in terms of the work that you do with someone?**

JESSICA: So through, through the

JAI Institute they offer. We work through a series of 12 weeks and each week covers a different topic, starting with like brain science, like what's behind the development of your child. You might be telling your child to come to the dinner table at three years old, but if they're off playing, they're, they're not going to want to leave, you have to understand that developmentally they're not, it's not, they're not manipulating you and they're not being stubborn.

They, they're just, their brains aren't there yet. They're, if you walk over them and look them in the eye and make eye contact and take them by the hand, dinner's ready now. Come on in. It's a lot different than I told you three times and all ages, not just, I mean, three's a little young, but still just as an example, so **we cover brain science, we cover healthy emotions, healthy anger how to have a conversation and empowered conversation with your child.**

And for me, Oh my gosh. For me, that was. **That was probably the most pivotal moment for me throughout the whole parenting, coaching, the training that I did**, because from the beginning, I've always been about communication with my kids, always been open about whatever questions as much as they can, as much as I could be.

I thought, again, I was doing it all. I was good. You know, I had it down. And then they started saying, well, **what type of communicator are you? Do you just listen? Do you jump in and fix all their problems for them? Do you, do you say, oh, don't cry about that? Do you do you what's the, do you negate their feelings because you know, you don't agree with them?**

And I'm like, Oh my gosh, I realized that I was the fixer. I would, they would tell me this happened at school today and I would, I wouldn't even sit there to listen. I would just offer all

these suggestions of what they could be doing different. And it really changed the way that. Most, my daughter and I, it's, it changed the way we had a conversation because she loves this. Like she's so open to growing and to constantly evolving. So she knew what I was doing and I would try things out on her and I would say to her, **what do you need from me in this moment? Yeah. Do you want me to just listen? Do you want me to offer a suggestion?** So conversation is so powerful. Yeah.

So going back to your original question. So we go through these different weeks 12, typically a 12 week program. And we go through how all of these pertain to your life now. Some of it, as I said earlier, is **looking back into your own childhood. And looking at how that affects how you parent** I didn't want to be a yeller, but all my parent yelled at me and it was all I knew. How do I stop that? **So going through the program on just looking at the target areas you want to, you would like to combat and strategies for them skills to deal with them with the issues that you feel you might be having.**

MERYL: That's phenomenal. That is great. So when you're dealing with, when we, in the work that we do, **we talk about the five pillars of health, we talk about nutrition, we talk about stress, we talk about sleep, we talk about movement, we talk about relationships.** So how does that come into play? Are you talking about things other than just, okay, well, the communication, are we addressing, Okay. Sort of the global. Okay. Well, what are the habits that are going on in the house? Or does that play a role in some of this? So

JESSICA: I think it all does. I think it all ties together. And I think **all of those pillars are covered throughout the topics that we talk about** for me personally. **I think it's so important for a parent to realize they are the first and most important role model in their child's life.** And I think I heard it once on Oprah **be a do as I do parent, not a do as I say,** right?

Because think about it. If you have a parent who it's snacking at midnight and your teenager comes home and sits down besides you and start snacking at midnight, what are you teaching them? What habits are you instilling them? And if you can, from an early age, just from the nutritional standpoint, the hour **we talk also about boundaries, about values, and if your value is health, you instill that from an early age.**

It's our value is health, right? So it is crossing the boundary for me. If you don't eat, have a healthy meal. You know, that, that's something that's non negotiable. What do you have non negotiables? That's right. Got it. Like hygiene you have to brush your teeth before you go to school.

That's a non negotiable. Right, right. So, and then ways around that. Just if they see you doing it, if you, if they've been brushing their teeth since they're a baby and they see you at night brushing their teeth as their parent, they are a blank slate and it is our job to teach them. Right. How, what we feel are the, what we want to instill in them

MERYL: a hundred percent.

Oftentimes I'll say to the parent, like, I'll say the same thing, right, what you eat and how you choose to cook or not cook and how you choose to nourish your family. Is they're watching, right? And you know, they're learning or not learning, right? I mean, how many kids do I see? Because we see a ton of young kids younger, right?

Any age from, I mean, my youngest one is probably I have a 3 year old all the way up till whatever age, right? But. **How are you imparting to the parents? I mean, do you come across resistance? I imagine because I'll have a parent say, oh, well no we, we did fine.** I mean, this is the classic.

Oh, well, we did fine on we ate Lucky charms and all that sugary stuff and. You know, they'll be fine kind of thing on they can have that once in a while. They can, I'm not saying you can't indulge once, that's a whole other thing, right? But when you're setting kids up for good, healthy habits, how do you handle?

Cause I'm sure you get resisted.

JESSICA: So a lot of it is well, my mom yelled at me when I was a kid or my parent hit me and I'm fine with it really, but let's go back, think back to as a kid, **how did that make you feel when you were being yelled at? What did it make you feel like inside when you talk? Is that what you want your child to feel like inside?**

Is that what you're going for? Can we just are you willing to just explore different ways on how to communicate with your child other than yelling at him or even one better? **Can we look at ways? To go about your conversation before you get to yelling, what's bringing you to that yelling point.** Yeah.

Let's, let's knock that out of the way first. So in terms of healthy habits, healthy food habits, what, yeah, you can feed your child's lucky charms or whatever, sugary cereal, but did you have cavities as a kid? Is that what you want for your kid? Did you have? And here, here's the thing, you know better, right?

If you know better, do you want to do better?

MERYL: So important. So important. And I all of this studies, I mean, they're all over the place now. I mean, I feel like if you're not paying attention, you're living in a hole, right? About ultra processed food, ultra processed food, ultra processed food, how it affects our kids.

And yet I'll walk around the grocery store and watch these parents throw all this garbage because it's quick and it's easy and it's fast and nobody has the time anymore. I feel like. We all got to take three steps, 10 steps back and be like, okay, wait, what is going on here? Because if you're not nourishing their brains You know, with real food right.

Then what junk in, you're gonna get junk out. Right. How I guess part of it. And, and do you see this or do you come across this? Because I think, look, there are so many more kids that have been diagnosed with a, d d. adhd. I almost feel it's like the norm, rather. It's like the, not the exception to the rule anymore.

It's almost the rule and everybody, I wonder if our brains were actually even designed to sit in a classroom. Right. Right. We know it. They're not. Right. So what? Yeah. And I feel like we really do need to Embrace more of the individual style of learning of how kids learn rather than just sitting in a classroom or anything like that.

Do you, do you talk about sort of the individuality of how do you help these kids who almost need to be put in this box? And, and and then they're all on medications and they're not feeling, I don't know, we're dealing with just so much repercussion of these kids on the meds and then they're not eating and then they have, they're so undernourished and malnourished because of some of this stuff.

JESSICA: Right. Well, I just wanted to address one thing you said, as far as the ADD and ADHD, I feel like that goes more to a therapist because I don't deal with, with disorders of that nature. However, From the approach. **I do believe that every child is different. Every child learns differently.** Every not every child.

No child should be put into a box or there was not children and **we are not a one size fits all** you might like going out and working out outside. I might like feel more comfortable in my house. **There's no one size approach to parenting either.** Look at your, you have three children. I have three children.

I know I don't speak to all my three children the same way. I know there's certain conversations I have to have this way. I know one child does not like to be questioned a ton and I have to approach it, him in a different way than one of my other kids. You know, that's, that's, that's parenting. That's everything is different.

It's also what going back to what you said from the beginning, **if you started at an early age, if you're in tune to what your child needs and who they are, you're able to better do your research and find out what is going to work best for your child.** Yeah. And going back to what you said about the going through the super supermarket aisles, so much of parenting is we're so overscheduled and we have so much going on in our lives.

They want quick and easy. Yes. And some, and vegetables are, they're not cheap first of all, and they're not. But they can be quick and quick and easy. Build a garden with your child. Yes. Take take, make it, make it a family inclusive project. What can we do? What? How can we, how can we incorporate this together when they're old enough?

Have them in the kitchen with you. Yes. See what make it a family event. And then. Oh my gosh, my, for me, dinner time is like the golden hour. Yeah, so, and again, scheduling, **how many times do you sit down with your full family at a dinner table? But if you make it a priority, like what are your priorities? The baseball game or sitting down to a dinner?** And if it is, well, both. Baseball is important too, because we come from a sports family. Have dinner earlier. Right. **You know, even have dinner later, come home and have a healthy snack together. So much good stuff comes from around the dinner table because you're communicating,**

it's phones off to the side, everyone is.

Everyone's there. You have everyone's attention. Yes. Talk about whatever you want to talk about.

MERYL: Exactly. Right. I mean, we did the same thing. I, I, I feel so strongly about that. And I think I have done a blog or a podcast very, very early on, like the demise of the family dinner is the demise of the family unit.

It really **the fact that we don't have family dinners, where are we connecting with our kids?** Right. And now more so than ever, because of social media, because of the phones, because of technology. And so yeah, how do we I mean, even now when my kids, so we look, you have three kids. I have three kids, right?

Yeah. It was soccer. It was basketball. It was this, it was that, but I will say growing up for them most nights of the week, maybe not every single night, most nights we did have family dinner. It was important to sit around. How was your day? What happened? And we all connected. And then, of course, for us, Friday nights, Shabbat, it was always like, okay, we're all together. That was a non negotiable and bring your friends. And, and to this day the kids will come home wherever they are, whatever they're doing. And when they're around and they're in town, we're doing, they're like, we, they look forward to the dinner, right. To, to all of us talking and not cleaning up so fast and not rushing out and being able to connect.

And I think there is this unspoken connection with that. I mean, there's spoken, there's the unspoken. And how we really are so dismissive of that now, like that it's not important. I've been watching more documentaries on, on just connection and community.

Right. I think post COVID. The fact that we realize we need community. Humans need community. We don't survive in country. Community, context, connection, all of those things. And because we don't have that. we've suffered as a society. It's just about the I, the I, the I. Well, if it's all about you and you've got nothing, then what do you end up with?

And you know, how do you What does that look like in the, in the context of the parenting of how you would put in that, you know, that in space

JESSICA: I find the, the, the teens, like the young teens, like right after like **13, 14 to be the most difficult to reach because they've known this, their whole life**, they're just attached. It's something that it definitely comes up a lot, but how much are there rules? And again, **it goes back to what are your boundaries? Yes. You have to set the boundaries. You're, you're just giving, basically you're giving, I feel like it gets earlier and earlier for the parents, giving their kids these devices.**

They should not come without boundaries. Correct. They, you have an hour a day on it. Whatever it is, 30 minutes, no social media until you're in high school. There have to be boundaries set around them.

MERYL: You know, it's funny. I'm just picking up my phone a sec. Only a reason because I did see a very interesting.

I really, really, really want to find it out. I had saved it to talk about it and then we just started talking and I. Don't, so I'm pulling it up. There was a study, a research study done let me just, that said **95% of teens use at least one social media platform, raising concerns about the early introduction of smartphones and tablets on social and neurological development.** So there was the **Global Mind Project's recent research suggests that delaying children's first exposure to these devices can greatly benefit their adult mental health, specifically in their social interactions and self confidence.** Listen to this. **Conversely, early exposure is linked to issues like suicidal thoughts, aggression, and detachment from reality, especially pronounced in females.**

Overuse of screens can impede cognition, language, and social emotional skills in young children. Excessive screen time also disrupts sleep, reduces physical activity, and hinders social development. Key pillars of cognitive growth in developing brains. Bingo. Drop the mic on that. Yes.

Right. I mean, this was an actual study.

I'll have to quote the doctor **Dr. Rhonda Patrick posted this**. And you know, I, I just find it, it's how much more, you know

JESSICA: but if you think about that, I mean, it makes perfect sense. Yeah. I mean, you're these **teens, these young minds, and we know from the science that brains are not fully developed until they're in their twenties**, right?

So you have these impressionable, so **such impressionable young minds looking at these, even if it's these, these silly TikTok things that go viral**. I, it was almost like an epidemic through our country where they were punching people and walking away. Right, right. Where is that good? Where, where, where in your mind do you say, this is a great idea, I'm gonna go try it, but this is what they're seeing their peers are.

MERYL: Yeah. And we've been so desensitized,

JESSICA: so desensitized. And at, at that point I say, this is where it has to come back to the parents. Yes. Where is the parent involvement in that? Yes. And parents. Oh, I don't wanna, I don't, I don't wanna Privacy is, is, is so important to me.

it's not your job to be your children's friend. Yes, it is. Your, your sole purpose as a parent is to protect, guide, and nurture your child. And nurturing and protecting their mind starts with boundaries around their phone. Yeah. You're giving them this key to the world, basically, they can reach anybody in the world anywhere.

What are you, how are you monitoring? Yes. Oh my gosh, I remember my daughter was probably seven, eight years old and she was playing on this silly little game, this maybe Club Penguin, whatever it was. And we, you can't communicate, you can't, nothing happens. There's no danger in a Disney app or whatever.

My husband walks in and sees my daughter communicating with someone about where she bought a sweater, and it was for her little puffle on the game, and he starts yelling at her, you can't give out any information. I don't think she looked at the computer for another year. But, but it goes back to conversation, **you need to have conversations about what. What a safe use of your phone looks like** right. It also goes back to do as I do not do as I say because if you're sitting at the dinner table flashing through your Instagram and laughing at scrolls like, oh, this is so funny.

Why, who's to say you're not all going to be sitting at your dinner table. Absolutely.

Right. No, no, no, for sure.

AD BREAK

MERYL: So, so I have a question I guess in the process right you've got this 12 week process does the parent come to you. Saying, okay, well, I'm having these issues with my kid and they need better guidance and support and all of that.

And then you're giving them sort of these. Here's your task this week, or right here, what are you supposed to do this week? Next week? Like, how does that?

JESSICA: Yes. So the short answer is yes. **So the parents that come. And want a quick fix. Those aren't, those aren't the parents that I feel are really serious about making changes.**

They've got a band aid. They weren't looking for, let's just, right. Right.

I'm just going to thank you for that. I'm going to move on. And then they're back. You know what? I'm having another issue with this now, what you have to take, like anything, you have to take the time and really want to see a shift in your relationship.

You really have to think about what is it you're looking for? What do you want this to look like in the end? Do you want your children to, when they're young adults, to still be coming back to your house for Shabbat dinner, or do you want, or is it going to be like, all right, I'm 18, I'm out of here? What's your long-term goal?

Because I know that I, for me, we're, we're together. We're in it for the long haul. I want my kids. I want them to bring their significant others back to my house. I want us to always be a family, even when they have their own families.

MERYL: So is it difficult? You know, I guess I'm just, so obviously I'm playing, right, this is my, I'm like, wow, if I wish, I wish I had this you've got, how do you deal with parents, right?

Good cop, bad cop. It was, right. **I was the disciplinarian in my house and my ex husband was always like, okay, I'm going to, he was the fun one.** And I'm sure you deal with parents where there's one is the good cop, one's the bad cop. How, how are you? How are you? How are you?

JESSICA: It's that, it's that, that's a great question.

It's that and it's also a lot of blame. Well, I don't do that, but my husband does. right. Here's, **here's what I say to those parents. We're just focusing on you and what kind of parent you want to be,** right? It's a, they can, what they're doing, if you know, but it's like so I'm just going to give you a scenario.

MERYL: Like in my house, I always had, look, it wasn't to the extreme of it had to be healthy and they didn't have drugs. Like there was, there was like in my house enough that, that my kids weren't running to the neighbors to try and eat canned food. But my husband was like, Ooh, like, let's go get food before mom sees it kind of thing.

And no matter how much I would say to him, like, please don't do that. It's not good for kids. Right. He did his own thing. So, yeah, I was able to do what I could do, but how it would have been great if the two of us went together and said, all right, you're not just therapy, right. But coaching for the kids.

So how do you have the parents come together? Are you working with them individually?

JESSICA: I've had both. I've had different scenarios. I've had where I've just worked with moms or just with dads and both parents. **I have found that the parents that come together, are you, they're, they're both there for a reason**, but it's been a little bit of a back and forth. Will you do this? And will you do that? Right. It's like, let's just focus on why we're here together. And you, what, what is it that you both want? a healthy relationship with your kids. Yeah. And let's talk about how we're moving forward, how we're going to achieve.

MERYL: And so do you give them, let's call it quote unquote homework each week?

JESSICA: Yes. So there, yes, there definitely is. And, and there are different scenarios. Here's, **you can try steps one, two, and three. Let me know how that works for you.** Got it. And It's not, I, I don't like the term homework just because it adds to the stress up there and nobody likes the term homework, but, but different.

There are different scenarios that I'll present to them. Let's say this happens and we, **we do a lot of role playing. Let's show me what this can look like.** Okay. Show me what this, now I'm your child and, or I'll be the parent and you be your child because you know what your child's reaction is going to be more so than I do.

Okay. And then we work through it in that respect, like just giving them strategies, things to say coaching them through what that conversation should and could look like. **It goes back also to doing the work on yourself and to looking to what your reaction would be**, like, if you know that you're about to you feel like they do that more, but because they're looking from for a reaction from you. Yeah. So what's your reaction going to be? Right. Give me a second. Let me take a breath, walk out of the room, come back in and start over. Yeah. **Now you're also showing them how to deal, how to cope with a stressful situation.**

They can take a break, they can walk away from a situation and then come back to it. You know what? I'm not okay with the way that just went. Can we please talk further about that? Right.

Think about it also as a, as your boss, like, and you're talking to your employees, do you wanna comment at your boss, yelling at them and telling them what, what a crappy job they just did?

Yeah. Or would you like someone to come and say, to say to you, right, like, have a dialogue this, right. Have a, have a conversation, a dialogue. Not, it's not, it shouldn't just be about talking to them, right. Because. They're young adults. They're young people. They have their minds are developing to they have their own thoughts and ideas.

I don't agree with you. I don't see it that way, but listen to them. And I think one of the, that is **one of the hardest parts about parenting you have. This vision and this expectation of what your child is going to do, what they're going to become, what their life is going to be like, and then they start developing all these opinions and you have all these ideas and it's so different than what you thought for them.**

Right. What do you do with that. Yeah, you, **you're guiding them to be an independent thinker and independent person, your job. As painful as it is to let go of the expectations you have and guide them through their journey of what they want.** Yeah. And that can be, listen,

MERYL: I I deal with that now too. I'm and I'm paying attention again because of all the therapy that I've done. Right. Like, it's like my middle one is she is like the independent world tribe, like her own thing. Like she is really, really strong and good. I'm glad she is. When she's got that confidence and that ability and,

And she's, you know, all about traveling and I have to kind of take a step back and not put my own, whether it was anxieties about traveling preconceived notions about that and really like, wow, take a look at myself and go, okay, you know what?

Good for you. I'm glad you want to explore the world like I never got the opportunity to do that. Right. And yeah, and I'm proud that you want to do this. And so it really you know, yeah, you start to confront your own.

JESSICA: Yes. And, and but that's the key. It's your stuff. Yeah. And we don't want to give them our stuff.

I'm sure. In addition to what they already have. Have, yes. Yeah.

So my, so an example for me is, is grades. So I have two college age students now, and my mom still asks, asks, and I don't know if it's a generational thing. What are their grades? What do they get in school? I don't even know. It's not important to me.

What's important to me is that they're going to class, they're doing the work. And even if they're not, that's on them. Why? There has to be a point where it's their choice. It's their life now. We're giving them their wings to fly.

MERYL: And so, yes, and I think again, the more work that you do on yourself, the more that you realize that is the goal.

But how are we we've got so many of these Uber helicopter parents. How, how does that play into what you're doing?

JESSICA: So the first of all, and this, I say this. With all the love in my heart, I've seen, we've all seen it, but I, I won't go to them to, they have to want right to change. And a lot of those parents are not well, they don't see it.

So that's a problem. So those. They're not typically coming to me because they're doing everything right and they're in charge and everything's, I'm sure you've come across this too. If you see someone eating unhealthy, you're not going to sit there and say to them, you really shouldn't be eating that right now.

Or is that what you really want to do right now? Go to Disney World and you know, just pick any, any, mighty mo.

But yeah, it's the same thing with, with parenting. Like you're the only thing that I do do is just offer compassion. Yeah. If I see a parent with a child tantruming in, in the supermarket, I'm so sorry you're having a hard day.

You know? Yeah. Well that, yeah. You're doing a great job. I mean, just because that's a whole nother issue that just the judgment that we all have towards each other and the jobs that they're doing, I mean, you don't know what they're, what they're coming with or what their day was before.

So the Uber helicopter parents they're, they're an interesting, they're definitely interesting, but it becomes harder. I feel like it becomes, I feel like those are the parents. That when their kids get to be a certain age, like the kids are like, not, not wanting to be with them, right? Like the, and the closet eaters, like you didn't let your kid have junk food for their whole life and they're going to college and they're, or they're, they're hoarding chocolate bars in their room.

Right. You know, again, just to those parents out there that aren't that way, take a step back. Yeah. Listen to your children.

MERYL: Well, and I think, I guess there is that sort of piece of this that is. You look, you can understand it. Look at the world we're living in with the shootings. And right. I mean, I don't have to tell you that as a Parkland parent, but so, so I think that trauma and that anxiety for the parents also right is, is.

I mean, that has to come up right as part of the parenting of like, well, how do I protect my kid? And yet I don't want to be too controlling and right. I don't know. I mean, right.

JESSICA: That that's a whole, that's to me, that falls under safety. Yeah. To me, that's different than being on pinnacle or canvas and checking all the grades.

That to me is safety and coming from where I, where my, my own experiences. Safety trumps everything else. Right.

MERYL: So how do you tell like what? So like seriously, I can't take an example. Thank goodness. I almost say to myself, thank God my kids aren't in school anymore. Right.

Because I'm like, I mean I don't really want it.

This is a whole nother topic. You can go to the mall. You can go to a movie theater. Right. So safety is a whole other topic and you're absolutely right. Right. So as a parent, so they've been coaching a parent.

JESSICA: So. **safety with boundaries. Yeah. So my kids are all on my 360. Yeah. And non negotiable for me.**

Right. But I'm not checking. Oh, I see that you went to the bar and you didn't do your, did you do your homework? **I need to know that you are back in your room and you're safe** and that you're safe. Yeah. That's it. Yeah. Even if it's not your room and you're somewhere else, I just want to know if I text you and because I've seen that you're not in your room or that this happened or this, you good?

Yes, I'm good. And a code back if you're not good, like whatever it is, a letter or whatever you are. Again, **boundaries and values and a strategy going in.** Yeah. If you have, if you're not in a safe situation, type me the letter Y or you know, whatever it is. Yes. Right. And again, I see where you are on Life 360 and I will be there.

I'll come get you if, if you're in a, in location, otherwise, I know. And also, it's okay, I believe that it's okay to ask for your roommate's phone numbers or someone who lives on your hall's phone numbers. Right. Well just. Safety.Safety first. Always. And it is not, but, and **this is the big caveat, it's not about prying or taking away their privacy.**

Right. And that's what they need to know. Right. That you are safe. This is where, and it all goes back to the conversation. Yeah. I need to know that you're safe. I need to know that you're okay. That is non negotiable for me. Tell me this is what I need from you.

MERYL: Right. That's it. Like you said, it still goes back to the conversation and the communication, which is so hard.

So how are you, like how are we getting client, like, where, where is your referral? So like, how do people contact you? Like, what is that whole process?

JESSICA: So I feel like most of my clients right now are coming from word of mouth. Right. I do have a website where they can go and book a book appointment or we'll start that on this podcast.

So yeah, you guys will have access. Thank you.

We start with a discovery call. What are you looking for? And make sure that we're a fit and then we go on from there.

MERYL: Got it. So, so the initial whatever, right? The 12 week program, do people have follow up? Like, how does that work then after the 12 weeks?

JESSICA: So they, if they choose to stay on, we, Okay.

Absolutely can stay on have if they want to do like a monthly check in, we can do a monthly check in if they want to stay on without any content and just talk about how that parenting journey is going. You can do that as well. I know that like therapists, people hold on to their coaches for years.

Because the parent, right? What are you doing? Exactly. The dynamics change. I know I may be calling you.

MERYL: But yeah, so, so really there is no there's no specific time. Like it's never too early. It's never too late.

JESSICA: **It's never too early. It's never too late.** That's a perfect way to look because it's same with your patients or clients.

It's, **you're never too late to make a change. It's never too late.**

MERYL: Yeah. Yeah. I mean, have you had older parents with older kids come to you and say, well, I need to repair a damaged relationship? Is that,

JESSICA: I have not, but I do know of people that it has happened with and not maybe not directly. Yeah. With there have been situations where grandparents are now caring for their grandchildren, and it goes back to repairing their relationship with the child.

Oh, how interesting. Yeah.

MERYL: So, that's a whole other dynamic. Right? The grandparents who are taking care

of the kids.

JESSICA: Yes. Think about all the dynamics we have now, I mean, grandparents taking the kids, taking care of the kids two same sex parents so the world is always changing and evolving and what was a typical two parent, two child home, that's almost a rarity these days. I mean, there's so many different... Types of **there are so many different family dynamics out there, but at the root of all of them is good support, good conversation, good dialogue and and tools** and tools.

MERYL: Yes. So, oh my God, I just have it on the tip of my tongue. I wanted to ask something about, oh, so do you, is it only with the parents or do you work with kids too?

JESSICA: Yeah, only parents. Only parents. Yeah. Okay, gotcha. There have been times that the parent asks to come just see my house. Is there anything I can do differently? Got it. Like, an area that I can set up for my child. Is there any something like that I would do, but I, **my goal is to, you're the leader, you're the parent, you're in charge**, right? I'm giving you the tools to do. Okay. Good job.

MERYL: Any, any, Success stories you want to share, anything that comes to mind that was particularly like you felt challenging or that, that the people listening would be like, Oh wow, that, yeah, that's me. And you know, I can see that there's some,

JESSICA: so I had one mom who who it was.

It was like an aha moment for her. She was talking about how her child she didn't like the way her child behaved on the field after a game. Wasn't showing good sportsmanship. So after the game, she pulled her child over and started yelling at her child for his behavior. Yeah. And I said, this is what I'm hearing back from you.

Your child was yelling at his teammates. And then you took your child off the field and yelled at your child. And she was like, I said, why did you yell at your child? She said, I wanted the other parents to know that I, didn't condone his behavior. I said, so you wanted to show these other parents who don't live in your house that are not your parents child.

You wanted to show them that. It was not okay to yell at your teammates for being bad sportsmen to be for being playing, whatever it was. So you yelled at your child for that. That's what I'm hearing. What does that sound like to you? And she was like, Oh my God. Like when you put it like that, it makes so much sense.

It was a shift. It was just a shift for her. And that's all I could hope for. **It's just a shift in the way you look at things, the way you approach your child.**

MERYL: Right. And so I imagine the next time she took a different approach. Right.

JESSICA: And that was also a scenario. **Now that you're seeing it, what would you do differently?**

And the other thing is, if you, if you stop and think. You already know.

Yeah. You know. Yeah. But it's just, and this is, **it's about asking the right questions and listening to their responses.** Yeah. And just telling them back what you just heard.

MERYL: And it's so, it's right. It's it's so interesting when you say it, right.
It's so simple yet. We don't do that. Right. We can't get out of our own ways. Yeah. Yeah.
Fascinating. Yes. I love this.

This is great work. I mean, so kudos to you for following your passion. Thank you, Meryl. I appreciate that. And what great work you are doing. Yeah, I want to be able to support this work for you too.

Like, I really think there's so many parents out there who need this work. For so many reasons, because I think just as a proactive place parents, new parents, right? I like, I have a baby, I have a young child, like, how do I, how do I create an environment that is supportive and that is nurturing in a way that's going to support their development.

**JESSICA: And if you start talking to them from the time they're young, and if you start offering them only healthy foods from the time that they're young.
Yes. Think about how much easier your job is.**

MERYL: Oh, for sure. Listen, I always say, right, that proactive stuff and, and yes, the nutrition part is a whole, a whole other conversation that we can have.
But anything, any last thoughts before we before we finish for today?

JESSICA: I think I would just say, listen to your child. Stop and listen to them. Who are they? Look at them. Who are they really? What do they need? Just slow down and ask them what they're needing from you in that moment.

MERYL: Awesome. Thank you. Thank you.

Well, this was a great conversation.

Thank you. I enjoyed it.

So did I. So did I. I'm sitting here going, Oh, wow. So many more. I have so much more to talk about. But enlightening and inspiring and hopefully I'm sure this resonates with so many people out there. So again, I appreciate the work that you're doing.

Thank you. And we are going to be posting all of Jessica's information on our website and every on the show notes. So make sure you go visit and share information with people that would benefit. Thank you again. Thank you.

And everybody, this is your Rebel Nutritionist signing off. Make it a great day.