

## **Why Your Kids Push Back – And How to Fix It with Michael Cox and Rob Hayes-St. Clair**

At Base Camp Live, we talk about raising the next generation can feel a lot like climbing to the top of Mount Everest. And we recognize that parenting requires perseverance. The old adage, the days are long, but the years are short, reminds us that in a broken world, we have to press on.

But we also carry emotional burdens that can shape our relationships in significant ways. And while emotions should not rule us, we have to learn to navigate them with wisdom. Healthy family communication builds strong, lasting relationships.

And in this podcast, we're going to explore how to cultivate emotional health and strong family bonds through a biblically grounded perspective. So join us as we uncover best practices to foster connection, community, and understanding in our homes and in our schools. All this and more on this episode of Base Camp Live.

Mountains. We all face them as we seek to influence the next generation. Get equipped to conquer the challenges, summit the peak, and shape exceptionally thoughtful, compassionate, and flourishing human beings.

We call it ancient future education for raising the next generation. Welcome to Base Camp Live. Now your host, Davies Owens.

Welcome to another episode of Base Camp Live. Davies Owens here with you on the journey of raising the next generation with classical Christian education. It's always a joy to be with you as we go about this weekly conversation.

Look forward to introducing our guest here to you in just a moment, but did want to give a big shout out to a couple folks. Justin Hughes, the head of school at the Christ Classical Academy in Tallahassee, Florida, along with Kyle Waters, head of school at St. Boniface Academy in Wichita, Kansas. Thank you both for encouraging your families and your teachers and administrative team to be a part of the Base Camp Live listening family along with a part of the Zipcast world.

Speaking of Zipcast, if you didn't hear last week's episode, Hannah and I had a chance, or actually two weeks ago, when Hannah and I chatted about the importance of the communication that has to happen for the strong partnership between our schools and our homes and just the ways that we can do that well. One of those was just giving some updates on this platform you hear me talk about all the time called Zipcast, which is just an extension of my passion to connect us together in our busy lives as schools and as homes. Zipcast 2.0 is debuting this summer.

It is an amazing platform. We are developing a piece of technology that no one has seen before that ultimately allows this blending of the local news, the fireside chats, if you will, of school

leadership and syndicated content on everything from parenting to Classical 101. It's a really amazing tool and 2.0 is going to be out this summer.

We've had some great experiences right now with schools in more than 20 different states using Zipcast. We have a rating of about a 4.6 out of 5 from parents and schools. You can read all these reviews at [zipcast.media](http://zipcast.media). And in fact, where there are, it's not a perfect five.

It's because folks have said, hey, we want some more features, like the ability to put in more custom content and to choose more of the syndicated resources. All of that is part of this new 2.0 platform. But if you just take a moment, check out [zipcast.media](http://zipcast.media). We'd love to have schools signing up for the next school year.

It's a real blessing to connect with one another. Also want to say thanks in this episode to the folks at Classical Academic Press, Life Architects Coaching, and Classic Learning Test. All of these partners have great resources, and you can learn more on our Basecamp Live partners page.

In this episode, I sit down with Michael Cox and Rob Hayes St. Clair. Michael is a licensed professional counselor. He's assisted individuals in their marriages and families and private practice, and he and his wife conduct marriage seminars and coaching couples all around the country.

He's got about 20 plus years of working with young people, and a lot of that drives his understanding of adolescent development and emotional regulation. Rob Hayes St. Clair is a friend I've known for a number of years. He has a background in business and over two decades of experienced transformational programs in places like the JH Ranch, where I met him.

He's also been a part of launching JH's presence in New Zealand. And together, Rob, who's also a dad and husband and a great, passionate follower of what it means to follow Christ in a world of raising children with all of the challenges in terms of their knowledge and their emotions and how it all fits together. He and Michael have come together and developed what they call the Core Four Framework, which is a practical evidence-based framework that really walks parents through tools to be able to communicate from places of challenge and frustration to places of peace, using a biblical underpinning in terms of their approach that they use.

All that to say you're going to hear more in this conversation with Michael and Rob. And also, just before we jump to this interview, a kind of really a teaser of next week. I'm excited Joanne from Wilson Hill Academy is going to be joining us and really talking about the need for school and life balance and this idea that, you know, I love the idea that not all rigor is rigor mortis.

I love that saying because we need to push hard, but we don't need to overdo ourselves. You're going to hear more about that next week as a little bit of a teaser as well. So lots going on.

Thank you for joining us for this episode. Jumping right now into this conversation with Rob

and Michael. Rob and Michael, welcome to Basecamp Live.

Thank you, Davey. Great to see you. It's good to have you guys together.

Yeah, let's jump in. Rob, you and I've known each other for a good number of years through the JH Ranch world, but just give folks a sense of kind of the journey you've been on and a little bit of your story. Yeah, thanks Davey.

So it's great to be on today and I'm here with my business partner, Michael Cox. And so for the last 20 years, I've spent most of my life working in the parenting space with an amazing organization called JH Ranch. That's where I met Davey's.

And if you haven't taken your kids to JH, I highly recommend it. It's a niche one week program for parents and teenage kids. My primary responsibility was around the student leadership program called Second Wind.

And then I also led, helped co-lead the parent-child program. And about two years ago, decided to step away and to focus on a different project that we're going to talk about today. So one of the things that I kind of learned while I was at the ranch was that parents when they were with their teens during the program would oftentimes tell us I had the best conversation with my children during the one week at the ranch in an undistracted environment.

I never really realized what was the key ingredient emotionally, psychologically of that until we started working on this new project. So I'm really excited to share a little bit more today about this concept, this principle. So thanks Davey.

No, absolutely. Before Michael, give you a chance. Folks are going to wonder, Rob, you got the best accent of any of us.

Where did you get that great accent? Yeah. My wife tells me I have to go back to Australia every year just to keep it alive. Don't lose it.

You could almost say anything. We're going to be mesmerized. So that's great.

Michael, yeah, go ahead. Share a little bit of your story. Yeah.

So thanks Davey. So I have also been working with teenagers. I tell you all since I was one, I started at 19 as an intern with my youth pastor undergraduate school.

And so I've been doing it for quite a while in 30 years or so. If you put those numbers together, you know how old I am. And most of that work has initially started as a minister.

I was a youth pastor for a number of years and did lots of work in that arena. Did education for a little while, but went back to graduate school in 2008 to get my master's degree in counseling. And so I've been working with teenagers, families, couples in that space since 2011 when I graduated in 2010 with my master's degree in counseling.

And so I've been after it for a number of years working with teenagers and love it. And so getting to join forces with Rob and putting our expertise together, our personal experiences together on a new and exciting journey. Well, I want to hear it.

I think I'd read you guys combined. It's about 30 years of experience, which who knows how many numerically, how many teenagers and how many families that is. But you guys obviously are speaking from kind of real world experience and what you're seeing out there.

So, well, let's jump in. You guys have got some really exciting solutions, but maybe first talk about what are some of the challenges or problems that you're uniquely trying to address? Go to Rob. Yeah.

So I think Davies, you know, kind of started with a personal story, you know, so as many great solutions start with your own personal challenges. And so about four years ago, my wife and I had been in this world for about 20 years. And we'd actually never been to see a therapist before in our marriage.

My wife lost her mom during COVID. And we started seeing this kind of uptick in conflict in our marriage. And so some friends recommended to get some help.

And so we arrived at the, who's now a very good friend of ours out in San Diego, we arrived in his office. And he asked us a very poignant question. He said, how many disagreements have you had in the last six months? And I said, well, since the loss of my wife's mom, quite a few.

And he said, well, let's say you had 15 disagreements. He said, I would challenge that. I would imagine you've had one disagreement 15 times.

And I said, interesting. He said, the reason is, is because we all have these things called pain cycles. And those pain cycles are tied to injuries to our emotions when we're kids.

And we have this kind of unique sense of essentials that we need. And he said, those two things are that we need to, two questions we need answered, are we uniquely loved and are we safe? And when those things aren't answered or there's injuries to those questions, we end up creating a pain cycle. And when we're in an intimate relationship with people, that pain cycle can do great damage.

So it really created, we went through this process and I would say that it had a transformative impact, Davies, on our marriage. I started noticing the same pain cycle though, in raising teenage kids. And in our work at the ranch, I also noticed that the parents would also describe, they wouldn't describe a pain cycle, but they would describe conflict the same way.

They would have the same conflict over and over again. And when it was working well during the week at the ranch, I realized that the parents were answering these two very basic questions. They were giving their kids the attention they needed.

So you're unique. And they were creating a safe place to have great discussions. And I thought, wow, we were doing this on the mountaintop.

Could we do this in the valleys every day with parents? And so my friend and therapist out in San Diego said, you need to meet this amazing guy named Michael Cox in Austin, because he is the go-to guy for this therapeutic process called restoration therapy. You need to meet him. So we teamed up and really just kind of got to know each other as friends.

We ended up doing a few cohorts as a trial run to see if parents would take to this kind of process. And that's led us down the road to establishing a business that we call Parenting Made Peaceful. It's a great name.

And that's where we are today. So really, the crux of it is this idea of are we loved and are we safe and sort of the implications of that not happening. So yeah, Michael, share a little bit more.

Yeah. So just a really quick background. So I entered this world of therapy and was very early after graduate school and training was introduced to restoration therapy, which is the framework, the base that we work from, and was introduced.

Similarly, my wife and I was sent on a retreat to go learn a process, right, to be able to help other people. And in that process, realized how much our marriage needed it. And it revolutionized how we communicate, how we engaged.

At that point, we had been married 10 years and realized we had had 10 years of adding on to what we brought into this marriage. Right. And so we do that and add a few children to it and just continue to build this pain cycle.

And so we learned this process revolutionized our marriage. And I was already doing work with adolescents when I first entered the world of therapy as a profession. I had already been working with teenagers for a number of years and recognized that some great work can happen with teenagers.

But what's really difficult is when you send those teenagers back home to parents who don't quite have their emotions under check. And so that work that's going on with that teenager, there's almost a deficit that happens because who do they trust? That person they see once a week for an hour, or do they trust their parents? And so began using this process, did not realize that the process hadn't been established for young people. And I just was using it and eventually realized that I was on to something and started working into developing a process for identifying and helping young people identify what we call their pain cycle, how to work through that and develop a peace cycle.

And literally through my own experience with my own child, did I realize that, oh, this is where the problem is. The problem isn't so much with my child and their behavior, it's what's going on within myself. When I enter these interactions with my child and my child is what we call dysregulated, I am too.

And so I've got to figure out what's going on with me in order to differently engage my child and not be reactive, what we call reactive parenting, parenting from a place of pain. What's happening in me so that I can better guide my child, I can better engage with my child, I can better communicate with my child. Once I figured that out, the child is much easier to walk through the process.

And so in that, I just started the work and soon we'll have that framework out and helping people understand how to utilize that. And in the process of doing this work, I was introduced to Rob and he just told you his story and it just seemed to be God's connection of the two of us of, hey, we really want to help parents as they help their children. Yeah, this is the age, unfortunately, when we're anxiety and stress and depression.

I mean, it's just, it's the currency, it's the world we're in right now. It's like that we trade in this currency of kind of the fragility of everything. And we're going to get into some of the principles behind it.

One thing I know I'm sure people are probably trying to weigh out, it seems like in the modern moment, and we talk about this a lot on the podcast, there's these kind of two big ditches. There's always ditches on sides of roads to fall into. There's the ditch of the kind of an overemphasis on emotions, which is where the world is today.

Everything is, how are you feeling? And everybody's kind of a victim of bad upbringing. And there's sort of this sort of place to go and hide and feel sorry for yourself. And on the other side of the ditch, and we see this is almost kind of an old school, let's get some grit, get on with it.

I mean, it's too bad you had a bad upbringing, quit all the whining in the corner and man up and let's go. And so there's this kind of conflicting situation, I think, especially probably a lot of the listeners in our Christian tradition, maybe more traditional, just saying, let's be careful. I mean, emotions in general are kind of the boogeyman.

You can fall on both sides. How do you guys sort that out? Is there a simple answer to that? Because I don't want people going, oh, great, you brought on some folks or just everybody go in the corner and lick your emotion wounds. Like, how do we balance that? Yeah, I think you are hitting on a point we were talking about earlier.

The reality is we do all have emotions. And I think sometimes we're too quick to dismiss them. And in other places, maybe they're over exaggerated.

We all have them. The problem is what we are addressing is we don't know how to regulate them. And so even in scripture, we have emotions, but it's not being driven by those emotions, whether they are pull yourself up by the bootstraps or cry until your eyes bleed, right? Either one of those, we still have them.

And it's learning how to regulate them. And so there is a place that we kind of take this stance that it's very easy to put it on the child who does not know how to do that. And therefore, they

have behavioral reactions.

And we are reacting to those behaviors as parents. Hence, a parent is very likely the person who's driven by their emotions. But what we're not doing is talking about them.

And so or we're over talking about them. What we think we're missing is that we're not talking about how to regulate them because we're going to have them. We all have emotions.

They're not a bad thing. We just aren't to be driven by them. And so it's learning how when those emotions are taking over, how do we how do we operate that? We call that an emotional operating system.

Every family, every person has it. But how do you regulate it so that you can engage in a different place? And what we think starts what happens is in the home is that that starts with the parents, the parents being able to make sense. Those are because of so basically, if the parent, whatever, if I can use a term like an emotional wound or whatever, that the brokenness is there, that just becomes the standard operating procedure within the home.

And then the child begins to emulate. This is we yell or we cry. Are we having a fit over whatever? So that's the that becomes a kind of generational brokenness that you have to kind of back up.

So generally, it's coming out of the parents world and then it comes to the child. So what do you and then and then I mean, in some cases, I'm sure folks are like, well, actually had a pretty decent upbringing. I think I'm pretty emotionally sound.

I think my child is probably dealing with something. And again, a lot of questions we're going to get into this, but I could see I'm trying to anticipate what people are asking. I mean, I could imagine, how do you know if it's OK? I've got a fairly intact.

I've kind of done some degree of awareness of my upbringing. The parent might say, but the problem might be something as simple as with this child is just honestly what we've ever subscribed them to three team sports. They don't sleep enough.

They're eating really bad food. And, you know, they're there. That's where their stress is.

It's not because of some generational damage. How do you sort that out? How do you know which way? Maybe just make sure they're sleeping first. I'll run over to Robin.

Robin, second babies. I love that you're going there is because it's actually what fuels us in this work is because we I think we do it backwards. I think we look child and I think that family that says I came up from an amazing childhood, I came up from great parents, which is probably true.

But unfortunately, where we say your pain comes in is what my family does now doesn't look like that. My children aren't who I was. And we coined a term that says that's parenting from a

child's perspective.

I'm expecting my childhood to either repeat what I experienced. And if I don't, I must mean I'm a bad parent or I'm now blaming my child because my child is not reacting to my great parenting still comes back to the parent right in that process. And I understand that what we've allowed to drive us in this society now is a child's behavior.

And I am responding to that. A parent that has a child in 500 different sports is probably more about the parent than it is about the child. And so a parent is why are we doing that? Why am I having my child and all these different things is because they love it.

Well, the child is now driving that, not the parent. And so our system is saying, hey, let's identify what's going on with you as a parent, that you're not putting these restrictions. You're not putting these margins around your children.

And that's likely because you're trying to do satisfy something within yourself as opposed to... Yeah, that's a great, that's very, very helpful. I know Keith McCurdy, who's a Christian counselor, therapist, who's often on, you know, he talks a lot about just, you know, the legacy of Freud and sort of the guilt, which is especially pervasive in moms, but dads too, just the sense of FOMO, I'm always missing out. I'm not, I'm not doing enough.

And you're right. So much of that is really just us trying to prove we're actually a pretty good parent here and we're wearing our family out in the process. So there's a lot of interconnected streams there, it sounds like.

So, yeah. Well, why don't we take a quick break and we're going to come back and we're going to, you know, dig in another layer here on this because you guys have obviously put a lot of thought into it. It's very helpful just to kind of get a sense of, you know, where all of these challenges are that we're experiencing, like being able to reverse engineer and figure out where things are coming from is very powerful.

So we'll be right back and continue our conversation. Hi, this is Dr. Christopher Perrin with Classical Academic Press. Grammar is a critical tool for a student's development that enables them to write, read, and speak with clarity, brevity, and precision.

The well-ordered language series from Classical Academic Press is designed for grades three through seven, and it will kindle the curiosity of students to learn and understand the structure of language, how it works, enabling them to order and enjoy language, all language. Visit [classicalacademicpress.com](http://classicalacademicpress.com) and use the discount code BASECAMP live to save 20% off your next purchase. So Robin, Michael, and I'm sure folks are listening.

We talked a little bit about just the, probably just some hesitancy and reasonable caution around therapy. And again, I mentioned Shriver's book, *Bad Therapy*. I know, you know, there's an idea today in our world of, let's just kind of ruminate on it.



Let's just go pay somebody to kind of, you know, sort out all of our victim problems. And it's quite a great business model because it never seems to end. And, you know, people just seem to, as Keith McCurdy talks about, there's more therapists than there've ever been, and yet there's more problems than there've ever been.

So one logically might think maybe this isn't actually working very well. So how do you, again, what you're talking about is not conventional therapy. You're really talking about kind of a biblical understanding of getting, grounding down to where our God-given emotions are and how we manage them well.

So talk a bit more about that. It's a great question, Davies. I think what we're really talking about today is the idea of helping our children, especially our teenage children, understand what emotional wisdom is in their life.

We want them to understand that they can be wise with emotions as they become young adults, but we can't give them what we don't have as parents. We may need to grow up in our own emotional wisdom as we're raising our teenagers. And my wife and I always joked, we lived in the Southeast for quite some years.

Then we moved to San Diego. And when you live in the Southeast, a lot of times you get asked, where do you go to church? When we moved to San Diego, people asked the question, who's your therapist? And so there's often this question around therapy can never have an end to it. There's a beginning, but never an end.

And one of the things that was so profound about the process that is really the underpinning of the work we're doing now is that it is rooted in this idea that there's an essential part to the human experience, but we need two ingredients to succeed in life. And when those things get injured, we end up coping through life, particularly in our relationships, but there's a way to repair those. Therefore, once we repaired, we can become graduated from this process and we can operate with emotional wisdom.

And then emotional wisdom is not just for the teenage years. It's actually for when we become young adults as well. Hmm.

I would imagine that's a pretty involved process because again, we get pretty used to, I mean, it's a form of a habit, isn't it? And we're just a habit of thinking that this is how we see the world as an adult. And when you're talking 20, 30, 40 years of sort of a particular way of seeing the world, it must take a lot to expose the brokenness of emotions in there and then to rightly order that. What does that process even look like? How does that even, how does one even get there? Yeah, it's a great question.

I would go back to say that one of the reasons that Michael and I are so passionate about this work is because there's a, the real burden that we carry is that we see a lot of people, we're examples of it, where there's an injury to a sense of identity, our uniqueness of love, and an

injury to a sense of safety, predictability during our teenage years. When those things go unchecked, they can do great damage in our lives in our 30s and 40s. What would it look like if we could answer those questions as parents of teenage kids today? And so, the unique part of the work that we do is it's actually not super complex, it's actually quite simple.

But we take people through a very simple process, and then we have a way and a language that we talk about it, not just in our own lives, but the way we can talk about it in the day by day process that we go through in raising kids. Hmm. How do you, I mean, what do you say to someone who is kind of in, listening to this going, I'm sure this is all great and fine, but it's like, you know, let's all go down to the health club and get a full assessment of all these areas in our body that aren't working right, and then let's get on a plan.

I mean, it's a pretty steep hill, I would think, in front of you to, you know, even if you agree in theory that this is a good idea, but the practice of it would seem very burdensome. And I'm thinking about recently, I guess, the Surgeon General came out and gave very concerning statistics. I know 50-ish percentage of modern parents today are basically in a state of constant stress to the point of it almost being debilitating.

So, the idea of, hey, let's gather up and let's dig up all these issues of our past and add that to the list of things that are challenging us. I mean, it seems like just having enough commitment, either because you're so broken, you just need a way out, but if you're kind of steady as, you know, you're steady on, I think, you know, what, I guess, what encouragement would you give somebody to say, look, it's worth taking the time to dig into this, because it really does have a big pain point. Yeah.

Yeah, I think this is kind of addressing your previous comment as well. I know that with the hesitations of therapy, obviously, as a therapist, yeah, thinking through, let's just go scriptural, right? One, we know that we have a health mate called a great counselor, right? And so we miss that. What does a counselor do, right? It allows you to, there's a prompting that comes from the Holy Spirit that allows you to move forward in something, right? To realize what's going on, what's happening.

And so part of that process we see in Ephesians 4 very clearly in 17, where he's talking to the church of Ephesus about what's going on and what's the result of our sin. Like, what is the reaction? How do we cope with things from a place of sin? We deal with it in a certain way. So we have behaviors that come as a result of our sin nature, right? And in transition in Ephesians 21, he talks about, but this is how we've come to know Christ, right? So there's an assumption that we've connected with Christ.

And from that assumption of Christ, of connecting and knowing Christ, we transition, right, in truth of knowing who we are and that we're able to engage differently, right, based in that truth. So there's a process that we go through as identifying what's stirring up in me, parent, child, whoever it might be, what's stirring up in me, what we call violations of love and trust, that I'm reacting in this way, either to my spouse or my child, right? I'm doing something,

something's caused that. It may be tied to your history in your childhood and generations.

It may be tied to something that's going on immediately, but we do have reactions to each other in a relationship. And those reactions oftentimes are from an emotion. And so we've got to regulate that emotion.

What's going on? What's happening in me that I'm having a negative or maladaptive reaction to my spouse, child, or anyone else? We've got to figure out why am I doing that? What's happening there? And that process doesn't have to be a long process. As Rob said, well, yo, I could talk to you about the last time you got on your child. The last time you and your spouse had an argument, what happened? What was going on? Why were we arguing? And what do we want to do is learn to do something different.

And we do that based on the truth of who we are, right? And knowing what we are and getting back to that. If we don't get back to that, we'll continue in that process, what we call a pain cycle. Well, it does seem, I mean, there's certainly the basic biblical principle.

You can't really introduce grace until you've really come to terms with the sin. I mean, you have to really say, this is what we're confessing. This is where we need healing from.

So I certainly could see that. And so as a practical example, I mean, I'm thinking about the old, you know, the idea of kind of kicking the dog, like, you know, come home from work, because your boss yelled at you, and your job is unstable. And then you yell at your wife, and then they yell at the child, and the child goes and kicks the dog.

I mean, it seems like what the problem is, actually, you have a job insecurity at your work. Is that kind of the idea? Like, let's reverse engineer back to the problem? Yeah, I can give you a really almost exact to that example personally, is I think through I come home each day, my personality is one that likes things in order, like things in the place where they need to be. And I don't live with a spouse and a couple of kids that maybe don't share the same idea, right? When I come home, if I have not had the greatest of day, and we can describe many reasons of why that wasn't the greatest of day.

But I come home, if I walk in the home, and I have not allowed myself to get grounded and figure out what's going on, I'm going to probably walk in the door. And I can guarantee you, I'm going to say, why is that backpack right there? Why aren't you picking this up? Where does this need to be? I'm starting to bark orders in my house, because I came in the house with something. My kids and my wife probably did nothing.

I came in the house with something. We don't even necessarily know exactly what all those things are. And what are my kids going to do? My kids, I can tell you what they've done.

They've jumped up and reacted to dad barking at them. There's no connection. There's no sense of love.

There's no sense of those things. I'm just suddenly this dictator that's coming in and telling everybody what to do. And they're running, and they're reacting in fear, because now I'm in trouble.

And I really don't know exactly why or what I did, but my dad's coming in barking orders in the house. So they're responding, and the work is getting done, but where's the connection? There's no connection. They're behaving and reacting to those things.

Or before I get to the house, I can realize I had a sucky day. I really don't like a lot of things that happen. Maybe there's justified reason, but it's not my children's fault.

It's not my wife's fault that I step in the house. So I have to stop and realize, wait, who am I in this situation? I'm a loving husband, very capable father, and I can go and I can connect with my children and say, hey, how are you guys? Do you have a good day? What's going on? How was your day? Then we can have the conversation about, hey, you know what? The house is a mess. We need to clean up.

What are my kids going to do in that moment? They're probably going to still get up and clean up, but they're going to get it from a place where they know they're coming from a father that's not a dictator and working orders, but a dad that's connected, that loves them, and it's safe to be who they are in that situation. So that started with me. Yeah.

Even if they don't want to go do whatever they're being asked to do, they're doing it in a sense of, I'm still loved. The love doesn't diminish even though he's clearly upset with me for not cleaning up the dishes or whatever. Okay.

Yeah. That's helpful. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Dave, it's interesting. The presenting problem for a lot of teenage kids that parents talk to us about is that I kind of call it the four Ds. Teenage kids are usually distant, disagreeable, don't listen, and are disrespectful.

I think that most parents listening today could probably relate to that. When those things happen, we become one of four emotional types of parents. We have this really easy assessment tool we've built that helps parents about five minutes.

It gives them an insight into when the kids behave a certain way, how do we react? It's not all day every day, but oftentimes we do our best parenting moments when we're in peace. We do our most damaging parent moments when we're in pain. Our goal is to help move parents from their pain cycle into their peace cycle using a model that we'll talk about after the break.

Yeah. As you're saying that, it certainly applies to all of our relationships. If you interact with another human being, there's a good chance.

Are you coming at it from just a place of wounding or a pain cycle or a place of strength? Yeah. That makes a lot of sense. All right.

Well, I'm going to take a quick break and come back because we don't want to leave people without giving some great solutions here. We'll be right back after the break. You choose a traditional education for a reason.

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Rob and Michael, there's a lot here. And I know that folks are listening. I'm sure everyone listening relates to this because we've all been in that experience of either being on the receiving end of someone who's maybe a little untethered from their emotions, or we've become that person that's maybe lashing out or saying things that really are not about the situation at hand.

It's just we're carrying a lot of emotional brokenness. So again, talk a little bit about this program you guys put together. Rob, you started to describe some of the steps, the four Ds and how we get out of it.

Yeah. Walk us through that. Yeah.

So what we often see is that when a parent is parenting out of pain, there's usually kind of four behaviors that we see. The four are they're usually blaming someone outside of themselves, their children, their spouse inside the home. They're shaming themselves.

It's their problem. They're trying to control the situation or they're escaping. Blame, shame, control or escape.

So what I usually would tell parents is that if you see any of that type of behavior, you need to stop. And you need to understand where is that coming from? And so like we said before the break, our best parenting moments come when we're in peace. Our worst parenting moments come when we're in pain.

And if you look at the scripture that talks about this is Ephesians 6.4 that says, parents don't exacerbate your children to anger. And what we do when we're in pain is we put a pressure on our children to answer a question that we have to answer in ourselves first. So what we do is we take parents through this assessment tool to understand what type of emotional parent they are to their children.

And so we have this thing called the emotional operating system. It's an EOS grid and it's a very simple test. And we can see whether or not we're one of four things.

We're either reactive, dismissive, passive or secure. So we're either reactive, passive, dismissive or secure. And what's interesting is to just level the whole playing field, we can be all four things in one day to our children and our spouses.

And so it's a very human process where we understand, you know what, I have some work to do because what I want to do ultimately is I have these four critical years with my children and I want to be the most secure parent to my children. Because here's the actual, what we really want to happen is we want our kids to go, you know what, in a world that's crazy, in a world that's constantly filled with all of these challenges, social media, peer pressure, all these conversations around all of these social issues. Where is the one place that they can come to that they know is secure and that is at home with mom and dad? And so what we want to do is we want to do this work so that when our teenagers come home, they can open up, they can feel safe.

This is where they're going to get encouragement from. We can only give that away if we ourselves have that. So is that assessment, it was interesting because you talked about in any given day, we can kind of have lots of ebb and flow.

I mean, our emotions are always in fluctuation, but this can sort of drill into really the deeper emotional issue that's probably fueling everything. It sounds like a pretty powerful tool to be able to get that accurate. Yeah, it goes all the way back to those two questions, right? If there was an injury to the question of identity, who am I? An injury to the question of am I safe? We tend to react and cope in four very simple ways.

We just talked about those, the blame, shame, control and escape. There is a process though, that we can help parents beginning with on how to move into peace. And that's what we call the peace cycle.

So I might let Michael share a little bit about that. Yeah, go ahead, Michael. Yeah, so in that it's getting grounded.

So I agree, we could be at any of those places. It's in those reactive moments, right? So when I am being the greatest parent ever and my kids are high-fiving me, who needs help, right? We don't need help in those moments. It's learning when that's not going on and being able to identify that.

But unfortunately, what happens, we want to go and point to our kids because they're reacting to us. And so it's learning how in those moments, how do I recognize what's going on in me, which is a pain cycle, that violation of love and trust, right? And how do I get grounded in the truth of who I know I am? So if I take the example I gave you about my boys, I may come in and if the house is a mess, if they're running amok, I am probably thinking I'm not a very good dad. Why would my children be doing all these different things if I was such a good dad? Well, the reality is I know I am.

I know I'm a good dad, but me barking at my children doesn't make me a good dad. And the fact that they wouldn't do what I asked them to do doesn't make me a good dad. The fact that I am a good dad is it, right? So getting to truth into the peace cycle, it is literally helping you get to the foundation of who are you? What is the truth about who you are? And this is not that ambiguous that everybody's truth is changing, is different for this person than that person.

It's truly getting solid grounded in the truth of who I am, right? And you find truth in three ways. You find it in God, you find it in trusted others in your life, and you find it through experiences you've been through. I know I could counter that barking when I walk into my home.

I can counter that at every other point where I've sat and prayed with my children, where I've guided them and be shown them that I am a good father. And I know that. And so I'm going to step into that in peace and engage with my wife or my children from that place of truth because I know who I am.

It's only in those moments where that's not when the other things are activated that I'm like, why is this going on? And typically what we've seen and what makes us a little different is we oftentimes put it on our children. Well, they're not doing X, Y, Z. So I have to come in and push harder and try harder because my child isn't doing it. As opposed to let's stop a second and really get grounded for you as a parent in truth, grounded in the truth about who you are.

And let's engage there. The beauty of that is that doesn't mean that we don't discipline. That doesn't mean that we don't give guidelines.

That doesn't mean that we don't guide our children. It's where are you doing it from? And are you doing it from a place of pain or peace? And so our process helps them, parents identify when am I parenting from pain? And how do I get to that peace? And through the assessment, they'll take you through about a 30 minute time where you meet with Rob or I, and this isn't counseling. It's actually coaching through a process of, hey, how do I identify when that's going on? And what do I do with that? We'll have a kind of a flagship program where folks can come and do a two day retreat with us and learn this process and identify what's going on with themselves and then step into a coaching process to understand how do I identify what's going on within me that's causing a reaction, get into a place of truth so that I can engage and guide my children from a place of peace.

Yeah. And so from your experience, for the typical person, I mean, once they begin that process, as we said at the beginning, this is a, it's a, it's a get in and get out. It's get the tools and kind of then be equipped.

So what's a typical timeframe as people need to get through the process? What I can tell you from experience, some of that depends on when you're going to implement. We can give you tools like in anything else you do is, are you going to implement what you learn? And so someone that implements, you can see it probably within a good three to six months and really

learning. And for that process, what you're truly doing is trying to learn a new way and doing something.

And so it's depends on the work that they put in and willing to, to put that work through. But, but the process itself, I mean, to get from the start of, you know, again, I'm back to a lot of folks who are like, well, I don't have time to blow my nose right now. How am I going to have time to make? So the time to just go through the process and learn these new skills is about how long, and then versus like implementation, obviously it's going to take some time.

Michael, what, what's your, what's the general timeframe on just the process going through it? I could tell you, first of all, I could, I could sit with you and I right now, and I could take you in an hour and teach you in that process. Oh, wow. You don't know my story.

It might take more than an hour. You would be very surprised, right? And, and, and identifying where some of those are, because I don't think this takes, it doesn't take work of knowing all of your past. It is knowing how, what, what are the, where are my reactions and what I do with that.

Right. And so learning in that process. And so with us for our process is being able to like, Hey, if you did flagship, you probably could do this in two days and learn this process in two days and learn how to do something differently.

And then once the, so again, beginning with the parent, once the parent is sort of what has gone through it and has that sense of now new tools in their toolbox, is it helpful typically for that team to go through it separately? And then again, it seems like you've, if you've passed on maybe unhealthy brokenness there, everybody needs to kind of get tuned up. Is that the idea? Doing it together. Right.

So what we've learned is, is a parent helping their child. I can help a teenager do the same thing. What we're learning, what the difference is, is at least in my research of the last five or six years is that the, it doesn't stick as much with a teenager because they're who is modeling for them, this pain or peace.

And so it's going to stick better with that teenager when our parents are modeling it for them, where the caregiver might be for them in their home. So it's not a separate time for the teenager, it's parents. Let's model it for your child and engaging your child differently.

What we both can tell you in our own personal experiences and the work that we do is that our kids are gonna start asking questions like, why are you doing this? What's going on? Who are you? Where are my parents go? Because you're seeing different engagement from your parent. Right. And so that can literally be pretty immediately, but it has to be sustained for the child to see that there's something different.

And so over time, I would say maybe three to six months, because now you're trying to retrain, it's not how old the kid is to be able to help them through that process. That's good. Davies, I



would say just one thing to add to it is that every family, every parent, every home in America today has an emotional operating system.

It may not be the healthiest operating system. And so this process allows parents to go learn a very simple process then that they can train their children in. A lot of the parents we talk to say, hey, I really want my kids to know the truth.

I really want my kids to know what their value is. And oftentimes what we've found in our work is that emotions can be a gateway to reestablishing what is true about them, what's truth in their life, what God says about them. And once we believe what God says about us, we can take a new action.

And so, and there's remarkable behavioral change based on what they believe about themselves. And that's the big difference. So as we, I know time's going to short here on us and I want to give folks some information on how to find you and learn more, but just, you know, do you have in your mind, and so many examples, I'm sure of just kind of the before and the after, like here's like scenario A before this, you know, we talk about walking in the house after the long day, and this is sort of what you would hear or see.

Give me, what are some good examples, maybe an example of where that impact in terms of the fruit that you see? Robert, I think you definitely could probably share about you and your son. The one thing I would add to what you said while ago, I think it's huge to say, especially those that are apprehensive about emotions, literally what you're doing is actually getting outside of your emotion because truth has nothing to do with emotions, right? So when we think about the transition from pain to peace, it's acting from what you know to be true, right? And truth is not wavering. Emotions are wavering.

I think it's just important to say that because I think it's, we're not, I, no, I'm glad you're saying that because I think that's, again, part of the part one we talked about just that sense of we're not, we're not playing the world's games of everything's about emotions and they have their place, but we are anchored to truth. And so that's, that's the bedrock underneath the whole experience. So yeah, go ahead, Rob.

I'll give you a very transparent personal story of a before and after. And we've also run these cohorts for the last six months, and we've seen some really amazing before and after stories from those. I would say that, you know, I grew up, I didn't grow up as a Christian Davies.

I'm a first generation Christian. Most of the way to follow God was through the ranch. I'd spend time with God.

I was hoping I was abiding. I was hoping I was bearing fruit. When my kids became teenagers, though, my reactivity increased.

And I had a very poignant moment with my youngest son one day where I had overreacted in a parenting moment. And, and he came to me later and he said, I apologize. And this is what

broke my heart, you know, and I'm sure that some parents could probably relate to this.

He said, dad, I've gotten a little used to it. At the same time, I met Lance out in San Diego. He was our therapist right before I met Michael.

And he walked us through this process. Fast forward three years later, my wife and I have been using this process over and over again. I will go through these four steps, what we call your pain cycle and moving to your peace cycle.

I may do this multiple times a day, and I'll give you the end result of it. So a couple of months ago, I was going to, I was about to go on a little trip with my son. We were about to go play tennis.

And, um, I walked in from a long day and, um, and he reacted and he was kind of coming across a little disrespectful. And if I hadn't had these tools, I would have had another repeat moment. Right.

But what I realized was there was something going on inside of me, but because I've been doing this work, I was going to come from a place of peace with him. And I didn't react. On the way to tennis, I asked him a question.

I said, Hey buddy, tell me what's going on inside. What happened today? Is there something going on inside of you? Is there something that's like, it seems like that you're, um, you know, that was a challenge earlier. And he opened up Davies and shared with me about his pain cycle, something that had been activating him that day.

You know what the most beautiful part of the conversation was, was that I was able to establish truth inside of him. I said, Hey buddy, I want to tell you what's true about you. You're incredible.

You're amazing. You're significant. What would look different in your life if you knew that true about yourself? He said, I doubt I'd be so much more settled and hopeful about the situation I'm going through.

I said, that's what's true. Amazingly different result compared to where we started with. And our big hope, our big hope is that as parents understand this process and they go through it, they establish this in their home.

And not only will it establish peace, but it will establish an avenue into conversations and connection, whether they can, where they can talk about the very things that they've always wanted to talk to their kids about, but it's not just on a mountain top. It's in the everyday moments that we have as parents. What a great story, Rob.

And I love that it's really, as you're describing it, you're giving each other better communication tools. So you're speaking out of truth and into truth. And ultimately it's so freeing.

I recently interviewed John Trent, who wrote *The Blessing*, and there's so much of what you're

saying that kind of echoes that idea that we're called biblically just to speak blessings into our children. Blessings are coming out of truth and they're building them up, not with just false emotions, but with a true identity and who they are in Christ, back to your core ideas of like, who am I and do I feel safe? So I love what you guys are doing. Thank you for your time.

And if folks want to know more, where's the best place to find you? Best place is to go to ParentingMadePeaceful.com, ParentingMadePeaceful.com. And on that website, you can find our assessment tool and encourage all parents to take the assessment. And then there are next steps after that. Sounds great.

Well, Michael and Rob, thanks so much for your time today and for the great work you're doing. We certainly need your voice, need your guidance in our world today. We really appreciate it.

Thank you. Thanks, Davies. Well, you did it.

You stayed till the very end of the podcast. Thanks so much for listening to this conversation. And a special thanks to our sponsors who make this episode possible, Classical Academic Press, Wilson Hill Academy, Light Phone, and the Classic Learning Test.

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Please join us. We wouldn't want you to miss.