

Episode 1: Welcome to The Heartful Parent Podcast

Christy Keating

Hi, friends, and welcome to The Heartful Parent Podcast. I'm your host, Christy Keating. In this podcast, we talk about it all, our parenting, our partnering, and our professional lives, because they are all a part of us. And we were never meant to do this alone.

Welcome parents, hello, hello, welcome to The Heartful Parent Podcast. I'm truly so happy that you're here. And that you've decided to join me for this first ever episode of The Heartful Parent Podcast. So let's start at the very beginning and maybe answer a question that is on your mind. Or at least it was on my mind when I first decided to launch this podcast, why another parenting podcast? There are a lot of great ones out there. But let me tell you, this one is a little bit different. At least that is my goal.

First of all, we are not just going to talk about parenting. And while that may be the thread that ties us all together parent, and I'm putting that in quotation marks, if you could see me the word parent does not define the totality of who each of us is, right? We are so much more we are people. We are partners, we are professionals, and whether all or some of those labels fit you. This podcast is for you. It's really designed for those who want a broader perspective, I want to dig into all of it, I don't want to be just limited to talking about our lives as parents because although that is a huge part of who we are, as I said, it's not everything that we are, we are so much more second, this podcast is a little bit different, because my background is a little bit different. And I'm going to talk about that more in just a minute.

But suffice it to say that I'm not your average parenting expert. And yes, I'm putting that in quotation marks too. I am a certified parent coach, and a certified positive discipline educator. But I am also a lawyer, I actually worked for almost 20 years as a criminal prosecutor. And I now speak internationally about child sexual abuse and sexual assault prevention. And when I think about sort of my goal with the work that I do with the thing that drives me, it's really about helping parents raise our kids, and sometimes ourselves with both rain and body safety. But without the bubble wrap, right, or I am not a believer in protecting our kids from everything they've got to learn and explore on their own. But there are things that we can do to keep them safer. So it's with all of that in mind that we're going to dig into a bunch of conversations that I believe matter to parents.

So we want to go back for just a little bit and talk about a little bit about my story. For those of you who don't know me, as I said, I was a prosecutor, criminal prosecutor for almost 20 years in Seattle, which is the center of the county that I live in. And I sort of made my way through that office prosecuting pretty much every crime that you could imagine. So everything from petty theft to driving under the influence to you know, sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and



homicides in the latter part of my career, I started to specialize in prosecuting sexually violent predators, which is a really unique area of the law. And it, it doesn't exist in every state, it only exists in about 22 of the 50 states in the US and so and what it is really is prosecuting like the worst of the worst offenders, those individuals who have already offended are likely to offend again, and that are sort of deemed not safe to be out in society. And so that's the work that I did but about 10 years into my career.

I had my first daughter, she was a hard fought pregnancy. We desperately wanted this child. She did not quite come as easily as we would have hoped. And so we had to undergo some fertility treatments and we got so lucky because this beautiful baby arrived. And I thought, it's gonna be amazing. And then it didn't go quite as I had hoped or expected. Some of you may relate to this experience parenthood threw me for a loop, it kind of knocked the wind out of me. I sometimes describe it as I felt like the rug was pulled out from underneath my feet, I suddenly didn't know who I was, as a person. I didn't know who I was as a partner to my husband. And I didn't know who I was as a professional or what mattered to me professionally anymore. And I certainly didn't know who I was as a parent yet, because I was brand new, that first year after her birth was, I think, probably the most difficult one of the most difficult years of my life, it was certainly the most difficult year in my marriage, it really left me kind of reeling, I didn't get a lot of support.

At work, I had a lot of support at home. But I didn't really know how to ask for the help that I needed. And I didn't really understand, like, why things were feeling so hard for me, you know, because I think we get sold this message that, oh, parenting is something we all do, right? It comes naturally. And breastfeeding should be easy. And parenting should be naturally and we should all just figure it out. And so I didn't know that the feelings that I were having were actually very normal. And because of that, I didn't really know how to get the help that I needed, or how to even ask for that help. And so my husband and I really, really struggled for that year. I did with the support of my husband and my family come out on the other side of that, but I came out a different person than I was going in. And as I started to settle into who I was as a partner, you know, and not a not a partner, not we had been, you know, what are sometimes called dinks, right dual income, no kids into the partner of a dad, right. And I was a mom. And it was certainly different.

And as I started to settle into that role, and settle into who I wanted to be as a parent and learning more about parenting, which started to really, really fascinate me, I started to feel a little disconnected from the work that I was doing. And I think a large part of that, frankly, is because I wasn't getting the support that I needed at work. And my my motherhood was very much treated as an inconvenience and something that really I needed to not bring into the workplace. Right. We've all heard that saying that, you know, we sometimes many of us feel like we're expected to work as if we don't have kids and parents as if we don't have a job. And I very much felt that.



And so as the years went on, and it was years, I started to explore the idea of a complete career shift. But when you've been as driven and dedicated and focused on this one career path for so many years, I mean, I went to law school, knowing that I wanted to be a prosecutor, because I had the opportunity in college to work with a prosecutor who handled intimate partner violence. And I knew that that was what I wanted to do. And so it was a real, really mess with my mind to suddenly go, oh, wait a minute, maybe I don't want to do this particular thing forever. It really did take years.

But I eventually went back to school and got my certification as a parent coach decided that I, you know, at least wanted to have the option to shift careers. While all of that was going on this inner turmoil, and eventually me enrolling in this graduate level course, my husband and I, his name is Jonas, he and I were talking about whether or not we wanted to have another child and I was at the point, then that I really did want another baby and he was really resistant. And when we dug into that when we drill down into the why behind that he shared with me that the year after our first daughter had been born was a really terrible year for him and that he found himself at times, wishing he had never met me.

I experienced a lot of I don't know grief, rage, anxiety in that first year. And that's a really tough thing to hear from your partner. But at the time that he told me and shared with me how hard that year had been we were in a really good place. We had definitely come out on the other side and he was sharing with me from a really heartfelt space what that had been like for him anyway, we we continued to dig into that we did eventually decide to have another child.

And we made plans to make sure that it was a different experience. And then we couldn't get pregnant. And I actually, you know, lost three pregnancies, we were really struggling. But we but this time, we were on the same team as one another, we did, again go through fertility treatments. And we were blessed with the arrival of our second daughter, who has been a gift, both of our daughters have been gifts to us, for sure. And it was a really different experience the second time around. After my second kiddo was born, I did go back to work at the prosecutor's office. And again, I felt like the level of appreciation for the dual roles that I held what and the support that I was getting as a new parent was really not great. There were certain individuals that were supportive, but as a whole, the my office wasn't, wasn't demonstrating that level of support that I needed.

And so about eight months, well, no, I guess it was really more like 11 months that I finally said goodbye to that work. And I opened the Heartful Parent Collective. And that was five years ago, I am so grateful I made the decision. And I've had such a, it's been such a joy for me since that time to work with parents and as parents as individuals as partners. And I have continued to build up my knowledge and my certifications, you know, since that time, so that I can serve my clients in the very, very best way.



So the Heartful Parent Collective is actually made up of five different components at this point five years in, I guess, one piece for every year, although that's not the way it unfolded. But there's Heartful Parent Coaching, where I work one on one with parents and help them kind of work through all the different ages and stages. I also provide fair play coaching, which I'll talk about in a moment. But that's my, that's my one on one work with people. I also have savvy parents Safe Kids, which is the division of the collective where I teach child sexual abuse prevention, sexual assault prevention, how do we talk to kids about sex bodies, safety, all of that stuff? And how do we raise a generation of children who understand on a deep, deep level, what it means to have consent to be respectful, to support one another, et cetera, et cetera. So I speak all over the world about those topics.

I also have the Heartful Parent Academy, which is a membership for parents that has been in existence for over two years now, and provides a lot of support in different ways with pre recorded content, and then access to me. And then I run the Safe Parenting Summit, which we just hosted in the first full week of February incredible event. And we will be running it again next year in 2024. And then finally, the fifth piece, you already know, it's The Heartful Parent Podcast. So I feel so lucky and honored to be able to kind of pull all these pieces together to support you and other parents out there in the way that I sometimes think I didn't get the support that I wanted or needed. And I love what I get to do every single day. So to give you a little bit of an idea of how I come to this work and the perspective that I share, because I think it's really important. When you are getting advice from someone or listening to what someone thinks about parenting or choosing a parenting book or a parenting podcast, I think it's really important to know, what is their philosophy? What is their training, what is their perspective, and there are some amazing people out there in the parenting space. And there are also some that just hang up a shingle and say I'm ready to talk parenting, right. And so I just that may not be the right fit for some people, but I just think it's really important to know who you're hearing from.

So when it comes to my work with parents, as I mentioned, I'm a certified parent coach. I am also a certified retain parental leave coach, which means I work with parents and their business their companies to help them make the transition from worker to parent to working parent, and I coached the parent and I coached their manager if desired to make sure that their employer like that our employers are supporting our parents in the best way possible to maximize the ability for all parents to return to work and do so in a in a way that feels really positive to them. I'm also a certified positive discipline educator, a safety expert, I'm on the board of the National Coalition to Prevent Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation. I have certification from the Gottman Institute and Hand-in-Hand parenting. So that's all of the sort of background that I bring into my work with parents, when when we're talking about partnering, which not everyone is parenting with a partner, but many, many are, I am certified in the curriculum that was actually developed by the Positive Discipline Association called keeping the joy in relationships. And I am a Fair Play Facilitator. And if you're not familiar with the work of Eve Brodsky and the book Fair Play, it's all about helping us build more equity in our homes. There it is a lot of research around the idea



that women in particular, and this is very heteronormative. I know, but that women in heterosexual relationships carry a lot of mental load. And that the invisible labor that they do is, it's often much more than their partners. And it doesn't allow them to step into the workplace into their professional or personal lives in a really rich and meaningful way. And it also doesn't let their partners step into their homes and the roles of parenting in a really rich and meaningful way. So it's all about looking at that equity piece. And we're gonna dig into that in this podcast.

And then when it comes to those professional lives, you know, as I said, I'm a Certified Retain Parental Leave Coach through the Center for Parental Leave Leadership. And I'm also certified again, through the positive discipline association in the empowering people in the workplace curriculum. And I've also trained with Tara Moore, who is the author of the book, *Playing Big*, and talks a lot about the importance of women, those of us who identify as women stepping in to our biggest best selves. So that's all the sort of professional pieces. But I think it's also really important to know, look, I'm a parent to this shit is hard. You know, I don't knock it out of the park every day, there are days when I screw it up, there are a lot of days when I have to make apologies to my kids, because I didn't show up in the way that I wanted to. But I am a big believer in self reflection and growth. And that's, again, what we're going to dig into in this podcast.

But here's a few more things, little trivia about your host. So as you may have just picked up on, I gotta confess that I sometimes like a good curse word. Consider yourself warned, I generally keep it fairly in check professionally, but you know, every now and then I get fired up and you just never know what you might hear. Secondly, let's see, I really value the fact that I'm not just a parent, and I'm not just a professional, I enjoy getting out there and being a partner and being a person being who I was before. The my husband and these children arrived in my life. So as a family, we love to camp in the summer, my husband and I love to do that. Sometimes we get lucky and get to do it just the two of us as well. And I love to ski in the winter.

You've already heard me say I've got two daughters, my oldest is 13. And in eighth grade, at the time of this recording, my youngest is five. And in kindergarten at the time of this recording, they're a little more spread out than might have been our original plan. But man did that work out better than we might have expected. It's been really fun to straddle those different ages. You should probably also know that if you if my husband ever appears on this podcast, and I hope he will, he is much nicer than I am. He is one of the most gentle kind, giving souls that I know. And someday I'll tell you the story of how we met and how we got together because that is not my first impressions were maybe not that. And man, is he a gem. I'm really, really lucky.

I originally come from Colorado, I think of it as my where my heart is. But I've called Washington State and the Seattle area my home for many, many, many years. I go back to Colorado every year though. That's I send my kids to summer camp in Colorado at the same camp that I grew



up going to. And then let's see what else what else do you need to know I bake a mean chocolate chip cookie.

I don't always get it right. As a parent I sometimes say I may be a parenting expert, so called parenting expert, but I am by no means an expert parent. That being said, I'm good at making apologies when I need to. And I think I'm pretty good at making my kids feel loved, respected and honored and putting connection at the forefront of our relationships.

So that will also be stuff that we talk about in this podcast. Speaking of which, as I wrap up here for this inaugural episode, I want to let you know that we've got some really, really fabulous guests coming your way.

So next week, you are going to get to hear from Dr. Jane Nelsen. She is no joke, the founder of the Positive Discipline movement, she wrote the original book Positive Discipline, which sort of set in, in motion, this movement of positive parenting and looking at what the research really says about how to parent with really what I call brain safe strategies. It's a phenomenal interview. Jane has so much wisdom and so many great things to share tips and tools with you, I think you're gonna get a lot a lot out of that interview.

In the coming weeks after that, you're also going to hear from some people in the parenting space, who I really, really respect. Christine Muenz is a parent educator, she teaches parents how to feed their children, how to avoid mealtime battles, and how we can talk with kids about their bodies and help them grow a healthy strong bodies. And that's a tricky area. I think for many of us who may not have the best example or may not have had the best example left for us.

We're going to hear from Dr. Amy Beacom, who is the founder of this Center for Parental Leave Leadership. She's amazing. She's going to talk about sort of the ways that we fail in the US, at least so many other countries. So if you're tuning in from elsewhere, so many other countries do this better than we do in the US, but the ways that we fail in supporting new parents, and how we can do better.

You'll hear from Dr. Jennifer Harvey, who is the author of the book Raising White Kids and she will dig into how do we raise antiracist kids, you're going to hear from a woman by the name of Amy Neugabauer, who teaches kids how to be philanthropic and teaches parents how to raise philanthropic kids, you'll hear from fairplay facilitators, you'll hear from positive discipline educators, you'll hear from people that support all of us who work outside of the home, you're going to hear from people who support that journey in really awesome ways.

So I'm telling you, the guests that are coming are exciting. They're interesting, they have so much to lend to this conversation of who we are as parents, people, partners, and professionals.



All right, I want to leave you today with one quick tip, one sort of quick win, if you will, for your parenting journey. And here's the quick win. And I need to credit some of my colleagues with this in my certification program to become a parent coach. I've been using this tool in a sort of modified way for many, many years with my clients. And recently I was speaking with another parent coach Sally Cutter Davis, who shared with me the way she's modified it. So here's what I'd like to suggest to you get yourself a notebook. Yes, real paper notebook. It doesn't have to be big, if it can be in paper, it's all the better and every day or you know, as many days as you can take that notebook out, carry it in your purse, keep it in your car, keep it in the kitchen, keep it you know, wherever it makes sense for you.

And as you go through your day interacting with your children, and you should have one notebook for each child right in that notebook, the things that you appreciate about them, the positive qualities that you see in them the strengths that you can recognize ways that you honor who they are and who they are becoming, dig into the positive stuff in a big, big way. Write it all down. And at the end of every day, or if you prefer, at the end of every few days or week, you can go over that list. Show it to your kiddo. Show them what your positive books says, show them all the things that you love, respect and honor about them and appreciate that they've done or efforts that they've made.

And I promise you that this one tool, which might take a little remembering, but in the end is super, super simple will help both put you in a more positive mindset about your child and help your child feel more connected with you. I think our kids here they tend to hear a lot of they didn't do this well enough. They should have done that they didn't pick up that toy, we sometimes let our frustrations get the best of us, especially as they grow. And if we can dig back into the positives, it will make a huge difference for you.

All right. That's it for week one. I hope that you feel like you have a sense of who I am, what we're going to be talking about in this podcast. And I hope that you'll join me next week as I speak with Dr. Jane Nelsen. It will be a conversation that you will walk away with new tools, new ideas and maybe a little perspective shift here or there.

In the meantime, if I could ask you to do just one tiny little thing for me it would be to hit the subscribe or follow button for this podcast and join me in all the weeks and months to come. As we talk about parenting, partnering, and our professional lives. I'll talk to you soon.

