

Episode 22: Showing Up “Heartfully” for Our Teens with Casey O’Roarty

Christy Keating 00:08

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 beyond our professional lives, because they are all a part of us. And we were never meant to do this alone.

Christy Keating 00:40

Hello listeners and friends. Welcome back to The Heartful Parent Podcast. I'm so excited that you are here for this week, because I have a really special guest. Casey O’Roarty is a friend and a colleague and a mentor. I feel like you know, I've learned a ton from her. And I think you will in this conversation as well. She's a facilitator of personal growth and development and her work encourages parents of teenagers to discover the purpose of their journey, while also providing them with tools and a mind a shift of mindset that allows them to deepen their relationships with themselves and their families. She liked me as a positive discipline, follower. She began her Positive Discipline journey in 2007, and is now a lead trainer and a certified coach.

Casey has led countless groups through workshops and classes that have left parents feeling empowered and excited about parenting. She also in you'll hear her talk about this has her own podcast, the joyful courage podcast, it's fabulous. She has nearly 400 episodes, and more than million downloads. She also does live and online classes, and individual coaching. Her first book joyful courage, calming the drama, and taking control of your parenting journey came out in 2019. And like me, she lives in the fabulous Pacific Northwest, with her husband and her two kiddos, one of whom is 20, and one of whom is 17.

In this conversation, Casey and I dive into what to do as parents, when our teens or young adult children are making choices that we don't like that are unsafe, that are dangerous, that have consequences, they didn't anticipate, etc, etc. Right? That, like, how do we engage? And how do we keep in relationship with those kids, and not shut them down, but support them in a really hurtful way. And this is not an easy thing to do as parents, and I think Casey's perspective on this, you know, she's been through it, she's still going through it. I'm at the sort of beginning of that journey with my team. And I find her both her wit and her wisdom to just be so valuable in this space.

Like some of the other conversations you've may have heard on the podcast, this one comes with a content warning. If you've got kids or even teens around, and you, you know, or you yourself are uncomfortable with strong language, or even really frank discussions about some of the things facing

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our kids right now, that may not be that fun to listen to you. Or maybe triggering for you. I just want you to be aware, you know, we talk about sex, pornography, sexual assault, bad decisions, alcohol, drugs, all of those things. And if that's not something that you want to dig into, then take a take a pass on this particular episode.

But if you are okay with that strong language, and and agree as I do that this content is really important. And these things are really important for us as parents to be talking about, this is the episode for you, even if you don't have a teenager yet, and that's just around the corner. Whether it's five years from now, two years from now, whatever it is, I think this conversation is so critical. Because before you get there before you get to the space where your child is making decisions that you don't love. We have to think about how we're setting ourselves up for those in terms of the relationship that we are building with our kids and Casey and I talked about it all.

So without further ado, my friend Casey O'Roarty.

Hey, Casey I'm so excited to have you here. Thank you.

Casey O'Roarty 04:50

Yes, thank you. I am thrilled to be here and really grateful to all your listeners. for tuning in. I'm excited for our combo

Christy Keating 05:00

I'm excited to and I'm also, this is a fun turn of events for me just because I've been on your podcast a couple of times. And we're flipping that on its head. And now we get to talk about all the amazing things that you do and no, and I want Okay, so obviously, as I said in the intro, you focus or work primarily with parents of teens at this point. Yes, it didn't always do that. Now, but you've got to teens, or young adults, now?

Casey O'Roarty 05:30

I do 17 And 20 actually have one teen that's official, which is wild. But there I have two adolescents, right. Yeah.

Christy Keating 05:40

Yeah. Two, you still have two young people who do not have fully developed brains yet?

Casey O'Roarty 05:44

100 percent. Yes, I do.

Christy Keating 05:46

And I do as well, I have one too. I have one teenager, and one little. And so I'm a few years behind you. But we are, you know, there's this crossover, where we're dealing with, I suspect a lot of the same challenges. So I want to kind of dig in here because the people listening who have teenagers or are anticipating those teenage years, you know, we all know that teens make decisions that we as adults with fully developed prefrontal cortex might not always love might not always like may have consequences that they didn't intend. And I want to talk about what do we do as parents? And how can we show up heartfully? When that happens, and I know you've had your kids do things I have to and I know many of the parents that you work with have. So let's start there. Like, what kind of things are we seeing kids do and what do we do as parents?

Casey O'Roarty 06:48

Well, I don't want to traumatize your audience. However, like there's no getting around brain development, there's no getting around it. So I'm so glad to have this conversation, Christy, because I feel like there's this idea out there, that if we have the right parenting style, and we have the right boundaries, and we have the right relationship with our kids, as they move into the teen years, that there's some magical way to avoid bad choices, risky behavior, and that Am I allowed to swear? Yes. Yeah, that's bullshit. That's bad information, like there is no getting around it. More likely than not? Well, I would say 100%, you are going to have a teenager who does things that are going to leave you feeling like, What the fuck? Like, what are you thinking? Right? It's inevitable, it will happen. Right?

I mean, don't you live with adults in your life? Who leave you feeling that way? Like, people are making stupid decisions all the time, myself included. And so, you know, the first thing I want to say is that, like, there's no parenting to avoid, you know, teenage risk taking or novelty seeking, because they are wired, to seek out sensational experiences, whether that is, you know, jumping off a bridge into the river with their friends on a hot summer day, or driving their cars really fast, or hitting the vape pen or trying weed or drinking at a party, you know, the kids, that's the way that their brains are wired, right?

And we can let them know our values, right, we can let them know our hopes and dreams around that right we can talk about risks, we can explore consequences that happen with certain decisions. But at the end of the day, our kids are walking out into the world and making in the moment choices and it is more complicated than simply will you need to walk away if people are doing XYZ or you need to just say no, because at the same time, their brains are are wired for, for peer engagement, social engagement, they are wired to connect with their peers to find belonging. Right, they are wired for creative exploration and pushing up against these are all pieces from Dan Siegel's essence of adolescence. Yeah, they are wired for this stuff. So while there are plenty of things to do and plenty of conversations to have ahead of the game, what I think is a place that is a gap for parents is what to do after your kiddo has made a really bad decision and I am thrilled to talk about this because I have absolutely been there.

Christy Keating 10:02

Yeah. Well, I'm here to talk about it too, because something you said really struck me. And that is like, we get sold this kind of bill of goods, if you will, that if we have the right parenting style and the right relationship, and we do it right, and I'm, nobody can see me. But I'm putting that in quotation marks, right? That if we do it right, our kids will be okay. And that doesn't mean we shouldn't work to parent Well, right. It doesn't give us carte blanche to go. Be shitty parents, but it's not this, like bulletproof vest that protects us from all the things flying at us. Right. Right. And I've been there too. In fact, just yesterday, I had a WHAT THE FUCK moment with my daughter?

Casey O'Roarty 10:46

Like, Oh, good. Yeah, tell us.

Christy Keating 10:50

You know, I and I just kind of think we talk a lot about how to parent proactively, but that's all what you do beforehand. And then I think in our judgy culture, we often look at those parents whose kids have made a bad choice, which is like every parent. Yeah, ever, right to the club. Exactly. And then we and then we say, well, that's because they didn't do X, Y, or Z, or that's about and so those parents then get no support and no guidance in what to do. After the fact how we manage it, when when a child does something that we really wish they hadn't. Or when they do something that they realize they really wish they hadn't done. Yeah. Right.

Casey O'Roarty 11:35

And yes, and there's this whole idea around, wanting relationship with our kids, right. And I, I'm there, I'm, I'm sold, right, I worked really, I've worked really hard to have a very open, honest relationship with my kids. And, again, what that means is, they have come to me with some pretty gnarly choices that they've made after the fact I do not have kids that are like, Hey, Mom, I'm thinking about doing this thing. What do you think? Unfortunately, I mean, we have loads of open conversation, but no, I don't have those kids. I have kids that say, okay, so I have to tell you something. And that's like code in my relationship with both of my kids to Okay, I'm going to feel my feet on the floor, I'm going to pull my shoulders back, I'm going to take a deep breath. And I'm going to prepare myself because I have no idea what's coming at me. And it has been things like substance use, it has been things like sexual exploration, it has been big things. Yeah, but all of us are like, Oh, God. Lalalala. But this is the deal. You know, this is the deal with open, honest relationships. They're not going to go underground. They're going to come straight to you. And actually, what a gift, right?

Christy Keating 13:04

Yes. Yeah, I mean, kind of a hard thing. I know, most of us as parents dread that moment, right? Where a kid? Yeah. Because, you know, I, I don't know us, whatever, I use weed I drank at this party to the point that I blacked out or whatever it is, right? Kids are doing all sorts of stuff. And we dread that, but at the same time, I would so rather have my children be able to come to me and say, here's what

happened. Or as you said, I have something to tell you, then to try to navigate those decisions entirely on their own and the cost, not the decisions. They've already done that but the consequences of those decisions entirely on their own. Because that's how kids get underwater. Right.

Casey O'Roarty 13:50

Right. Like that's the and that's a really, I mean, listen, we can talk till we're blue in the face. Kids learn humans learn through experience. And I've got one kid in particular, who's like, Okay, well, I'm gonna, let's just see, like, I remember when she had just finished going to esthetician school. We were like, great, she's going to look for an esthetician jobs like, actually, I think I want to work in a doctor's office, like in a receptionist office. And I'm thinking to myself, doesn't seem like a good fit to me. Like you're going to be talking to people all day long. That is not your jam. And but she would not listen, she had it in her head. It would be a certain way.

You know, she was about six weeks in and realize, Oh, God, I've made a big mistake. And she got to navigate things like talking to her boss, giving them a lead, you know, having to work at the job until they found a replacement, you know, having hard conversations. So she had to move through it to really experience what works for her and both the kids. You know, fortunately unfortunately, you know, there's been a lot of that in my house. sports like, Well, I'm gonna give this a try, see how it goes? And then bring it to mom after the fact. And I get to be as best I can, in deep curiosity. So how do you feel about that? Now? What are you thinking about that now? Is it something that you're planning on doing? Again? How might you avoid it in the future, if you don't want it to be a part, something that you choose into? What might happen if this gets out, like, and you know, other kids, or your coaches know that this happened?

So just, and really, this is the key, and it is hard, right? It is hard. The key is to really practice neutral. And just being very, very neutral, coming from a place of non judgment. Because what I'm doing, as I'm asking the questions, is, I'm hoping that I'm creating a situation where they are considering my questions. And those questions are sinking in to their brain, so that when they're not in the house anymore, when they're in college or out on their own, and they have not so great experiences, they can think to themselves. How do I feel about this? Is this something that I want to avoid in the future? What might that look like? Where could I have chosen differently in this scenario going backwards, that would have ended in a different result, right? Like, I want them to develop the ability to think critically about their own choices, so that they actually can learn from it hopefully quicker than I did, because I was not processing my choices as a young person. And college was a gamble. I somehow made it through not addicted to anything, with no STDs and no unplanned pregnancies, which is a breaking miracle.

Christy Keating 16:54

Yeah, I mean, I hear you. And, you know, I think a lot of us as parents, and I mean, this is my go to reaction to right, like without that sort of mindfulness piece that you mentioned, like when one of your kids says, Mom, I have to tell you something, that's your cue for like, pulling your shoulders back,

feeling your feet on the ground and kind of taking a deep breath. I have to do that too. Right. I have to practice the pause. Yes. My instinctual natural reaction is judgment, anger. And that as we both believe, like the WHAT THE FUCK kinda Yeah, right.

Casey O'Roarty 17:30

Are you kidding me?

Christy Keating 17:31

Right? Are you kidding me? And I don't want to be clear, like, I have a 13 year old worse, we're at the beginning of this. And her decisions that I don't like have been a real minor. I mean, like, yeah, the grand scheme of things real my like clothing, things that I don't like, or what, you know, we're talking little things in the grand scheme. But I still can go really quickly to that.

Casey O'Roarty 17:59

Yeah, how could my child do that?

Christy Keating

Right.

Casey O'Roarty

Um, especially considering what we do for a living totally right. It's like, there's that layer to have? Oh, my God.

Christy Keating 18:07

Oh, for sure. Anyone in the parenting space? I think we can be super judgy of ourselves. Right? Like, I'm more judgy of myself than I am. Like, I'm really good at holding that non judgmental space for my clients and the people, you know, but for myself, like, how could I? What did I do? You know? Yeah. So but for those parents who can relate to that, where they kind of immediately go to maybe the way they were parented, which is getting mad, frustrated, angry, judgey, maybe even punishing, right? How do we learn to take that pause? And you mentioned one of which, something that has become one of my very favorite parenting tools ever, which is leaning in from a space of curiosity, but not everybody knows how to do that. How to start with that, what that means, have to have you talked about that a little bit more?

Casey O'Roarty 19:07

Well, I think before we can get to that curiosity, there is like you called it that pause. And I want to be really transparent too. Like, there was one instance where one of my kids shared something with me, we were in the car, and it came out. Really just one of those things that as a parent, especially as a parent of a high schooler, you hope never to hear and he said, Hey, this is what went down. And I managed to stay really calm and ask questions. Tell me more about it. How are you feeling about it

now? And I did say to him, like, I want to be really clear that this calm, exterior is not what's hot. happening on the inside for me on the inside. I am like, holy shit. I'm really scared. What does this mean? You and I just want to make sure that you know that, like, I want to hold space for you. And this is really scary. So I want to say that yeah, there have also been times where I've heard news about things that my kids have done. And I, once everybody's calm, I'll lean forward, and I'll take about 20 seconds to say, what the fuck were you thinking? I cannot believe you did this. I am so pissed right now. And then I pull back and I take a breath. And I say, okay, just had to get that out. Just had to release that. Let's go into some problem solving.

Christy Keating 20:45

Right? Let's appreciate that reality check.

Casey O'Roarty 20:47

Yeah, I'm not a fucking Buddha. Okay. Okay, good. either. Yeah. And the good news about like, your experience with a 13 year old versus, you know, once you get into the later teens is she's giving you high reps, she's giving you lots of opportunity to practice when the mistakes aren't quite as crazy as they might be later on. So I think it's important for parents to hear that, you know, just like when they were little, and you decide in the morning, today, I'm not going to yell today. And you make it to like 11am, and you're yelling at your kiddo, just like that. The same is true in the teen years, when you decide, okay, I am going to work on the pause, I'm gonna work on being present, and nonreactive, you've got to give yourself loads and loads of opportunity to practice when you don't need it. Right, which means, you know, every time you walk through the front door, like stopping, as an example, right, feeling your feet on the floor, pulling back your shoulders, taking a deep breath, just coming into an intentionally experiencing that present, calm, connected nervous system body, so that it is easier to access, it starts to become easier to access when you are losing your mind because you're like, Oh, my God, I can't believe this is happening, right?

Then it becomes and it also requires a willingness to because in that moment, you know it, I know it sometimes it gets the better of me, definitely got the better of me the other night, we lean into that emotional fear, panic. And we come unglued. And that's the best way to make sure that your kid does not talk to you. Because you can't handle it, you are proving with that response. Not Oh, this is a really big deal. And I should consider my actions better. Know what you're sending a message about is my parent, my mom, my dad cannot deal with having this conversation. So I've got to, I've got to keep this hidden. I gotta go underground, I gotta turn to my peers, which they're also clueless, so not the greatest. So it's really important.

That's what I'm driving home here. It's really important to do your work and practice that pause, practice that center. And when you do lose your shit, like I did the other night. Also being willing to say, Wow, last night, my fear, my panic got the better of me. And I lost it. And I mean, I was reading out loud from a book about pornography and how it's basically ruined the sex lives of Gen Z. Yeah, and I'm reading it

out loud. My My poor husband and en both, for my audience kind of they were passively my audience. And their response to what I was saying. I don't even remember what they said. All I remembered was I didn't like it. And so I doubled down and I mean, I was coming from a place of, I hope my kids are never victims of sexual violence. I hope my kids are never perpetrators of sexual violence. Oh, my God. I mean, it was so emotional.

Yeah, plus being a woman and it was a nightmare. And I was sending a message specifically to in around, I know, this is your experience, and you are probably doing all the wrong things. And, you know, like, he was a robot who had been trained in sex through porn, right, which is not necessarily true. So I had to clean that up. Yeah. Yeah, really. And I'm gonna have to work a little bit for him to trust me to have another conversation around any kind of relational sexual development, which mean he's not a big fan of those conversations anyway.

Christy Keating 24:53

Well, yeah. I mean, most kids aren't but you know, what you're saying is kind of striking a nerve with me because what it's highlighting is that it's not just when our kids make a choice that is, you know, bad or unhealthy or unsafe. This, these kinds of emotional reactions from us come up in other spaces too, right? You are reading something, no one even involved. And then suddenly you're out, you know, off the rails about this.

Casey O'Roarty 25:19

So off the rails because

Christy Keating

Right.

Casey O'Roarty

Like, my husband sent me to bed, I was like, You need to go downstairs.

Christy Keating 25:26

Enough Enough mom. But you know, it also can come up, like if our teenagers come to us with friendship issues. And I mean, you know, our hearts hurt for them. And so then, you know, if something's happening, and they've lost a friendship, or they've not feeling connected to their peers, I hear that sometimes for my daughter, I hear that from other parents, and you know, what they're experiencing, and that those kinds of things which don't necessarily involve a bad or risky choice, but that can send us into a place of fear and panic as well. Right?

Casey O'Roarty 26:01

And sending a message of I can't handle this, I can't hold this space for you. I'm too uncomfortable with your discomfort. And, I mean, this is life or death. You know, I'm thinking about an exaggeration. No, it's

not. I mean, if your listeners have not yet heard about the, the epidemic of teen boys getting targeted online, to send sex to send nudes, and then extorted for money, this is happening to you, it's happening to at least one person in everybody's life, if it hasn't already happened to your kid, this is happening. And there are way too many stories where the boy does not feel like he can bring it to his parents. And the only other option that he sees is to take his life. Yes. Yeah, our kids have got to know that they can come to us. And it's and it has to be beyond lip service, we have to show them inside of every conversation that we're having with them, that we can handle it that we can hold them that we aren't going to make them feel more shame, or more humiliation, or more fear or panic or whatever than they already feel.

Christy Keating 27:15

Yeah, yeah, I, I think that is such an important thing to note. And again, not to like traumatize listeners. But this, this is a reality that is happening and you know, around the sexting and the nudes, but around other things to where when kids don't have a trusted adult. And let's be honest, even sometimes when they do, but, you know, this isn't meant to blame or shame parents. But especially when they don't feel like they have a trusted adult in their lives that they can go to with some of these challenges. Unfortunately, we are seeing an dramatic increase in suicidal thoughts, suicide attempts, and completed suicides in our teens, because they don't, they don't feel like they have anywhere to go. It is life or death.

Casey O'Roarty 28:05

Yeah, it really is. It really is. And I you know, like I said, I've been through. I mean, I'm talking through experience here and, and I am someone who lives and breathes and speaks and facilitates parent education. Yep. Right. And fortunately, I have a relationship with my kiddos, where, like I said, they come to me, they don't come to me with everything, which would probably, I mean, developmentally, I don't know if that would be appropriate anyway, it's okay. I know that they do their mischief and shit. Okay. And I have to be okay with that.

But yeah, I mean, it just like I said, I feel like there's a gap in the conversation around around this and in a world where, you know, it's not the same worlds that we were teenagers in. Even though as I look back, though, I mean, I was doing way with riskier things in a different context than my kids are high and the access points that they have with interacting with the world through their screens through their screens. I mean, we really should the bed with the screens the adults seriously God anyway, it it matters and I am not one that's like let's freak everybody out. Let's doomsday the screen thing. It is here. You know, it's here. I remember I did a podcast with my kids. years ago. I was maybe like, five years ago, I had them in the closet with me, which is hilarious, bro.

Christy Keating 29:42

Like, I remember listening to that one. Yeah,

Casey O'Roarty 29:44

Yeah, we we talked about screens and I was asking them and I remember asking Rowan Rowan might have been 14 so maybe it was six years ago. And I asked something about dick pics. And she was like, sorry, everyone. I hope that like warning. Yeah, or Getting if you're listening with young kids. You know Rowan was like, Oh yeah, it happens all the time. You just have to filter through and my heart broke. That that was just a thing that our kids have to navigate that it's just something you have to navigate. Right? You know, and then the the, the access to porn and the idea that I mean this book, I was reading the normalization of hetero anal sex as this thing that teenagers are doing like, No, this is not no teenage girl is like, Yeah, I'm into that. Yeah. Without the influence of pornography. Anyway, the traumatize everyone?

Christy Keating 30:45

Well, no, I mean, it's you're spot on. And actually, a couple of weeks ago, we had Dr. Mandy Sanchez, on the podcast, from culture reframed, which is all about protecting our youth from the dangers of pornography. And like you, Casey, you know, anyone that works with me or attended my classes, or the safe parenting Summit, which I know you were a speaker in. I'm not about, you know, fear mongering either. Like, I want us to feel informed and empowered. And there are things we need to know that are going on, so that we can come from that place of empowerment. Yeah, right, that we can we can step into that calm, X exterior, at least, yes, not a calm interior, when we're interacting with our kids, because it is so critical that they feel like they can trust us.

Casey O'Roarty 31:37

Yeah, and I think there's this meme that shows up every once in a while on social media that I love, which is go something like when my kid makes a mistake, rather than the first thing they think being I'm going to be in so much trouble. I want the first thing they think to be I gotta call my mom. Yes. Right. Like, that's the goal. And if that is the goal, then they've got to know that we can handle it, that we can hold it that even if we get a little Rayji at the end of the day, like I think II and my son in particular, he's like, he has a pretty high tolerance for me. And then is also willing to be like, Why are you so pissed at me right now? You know, like, he can he? I mean, 17 years of being in relationship with someone but kid knows me probably better than anyone else. He's been studying me all these years.

Yeah. So I'm not perfect, right? Like I definitely. And we talk about that, too. You know, as he gets older, he's a junior, he's going to be a senior next year. And as I think about him going away to college, I want to make sure he has a lot of room to choose things like, when is he going to come home? What does he have going on tomorrow? What might be the best course of action, if he wants to see his girlfriend tonight, to make sure he also takes care of whatever he needs to take care of. So we have all these conversations and I want to I want his senior year, not to be one of no rules. But I do want it to be one where he has the room that he needs to practice the freedom he will be stepping into you and he goes away to school.

Christy Keating 33:20

Well, yeah, and I think that is such a hard

Casey O'Roarty 33:24

I'm controlling. So it's really hard. Well, for sure.

Christy Keating 33:27

I am too. And I also think when I think and you've mentioned like your own sort of college years and whatever, and it's terrifying. You know, I had a you know, high school upbringing, where I wasn't really given that freedom, my parents and I, you know, adore my parents, but that was not the style of parenting back in the day. And you and I are the same age.

Casey O'Roarty 33:54

Yeah, I got a lot. Yeah.

Christy Keating 33:57

And so then I got to college and had suddenly it was like, right, like I had no,

Casey O'Roarty 34:02

I had no skills. I had no skills

Christy Keating 34:05

for managing myself in that kind of an environment. And I definitely made some risky choices, some poor choices, some, you know, I made mistakes. And I'm sure my parents sent me off to college. I was like, She's a good kid. She'll be fine. She's Yeah, right. She doesn't make big these big mistakes, like, like those other kids do. And lo and behold, it was just a matter of time.

Casey O'Roarty 34:37

Yeah, coming home with a point five GPA. My second semester of my sophomore year, my parents were like, where did you go? I said, Well, I didn't go to class, you know?

Christy Keating 34:47

Yeah. Well, I I was out and I'm like, I managed to keep my grades. Okay, but, but that was through a series of, you know, exhausting myself because I was yeah, you know, yeah, messing around. And nighters. Yeah. And then making sure I get get to the next party. Yeah. Right. And so because I had, and to this day, I still have FOMO. I was like, but it's a Thursday night, and I might miss something that's gonna happen. Right. So that was, yeah, that was my call Wednesday, or I did not call my parents to talk about any of the bad choices that I made, or to get their help. And not because they didn't think they, you know, not because they thought they didn't love me, or wouldn't keep loving me. But because I don't believe I thought they could handle it.

Casey O'Roarty 35:37

I didn't think they could handle it. I didn't think they I didn't think that mine saw me. I felt like, I wasn't who they wanted me to be, you know, it was very clear what was valued. And I, you know, adore I love my parents, I know, this is my shirt, right? But the message I received was, you know, look, act be a certain thing. And you have value. And when I kind of veered off into you know, Grateful Dead kind of hippie land. My individuation really didn't happen until college because I didn't really have space to individuate in high school, I went to private school, I was kept under pretty good lock and key. Even as I got into loads of mischief, it was just all really sneaky. And getting caught. But for the most part presented is pretty easy, good grades, and yeah, good friends, but I was The Wild One of my group even in high school. And yeah, same story. College was crazy. And so, you know, I think that's another thing to remember too is, and we aren't going to get it perfect. I know, I send messages on, you know, mistakenly, to my kids, just like I did the other night to Ian.

But the more intentional and conscious and aware we can be the more reflective we can be without being crazy people, right? But just because we're humans here to grow and develop, the more conscious we can be, you know, the more the more opportunity, we have to say, Hey, I'm wondering if when I said this thing if it felt like this to you. And I want you to know, here's where I stand on that. Right? Or I wonder last night or yesterday or last week, when you told me this situation that came up with your buddies and I reacted, I was pretty emotional about that. And wondering, how did that feel for you? And what do you think I was scared of? Right? Like, I just feel like it's always an opportunity to tease apart the human experience that we're having. And some kids, I mean, I'm listening, I'm thinking about listeners, thinking about people in my community, who are like, yeah, that'd be great to be able to have that conversation. My kid does not open up like that. And that's okay, too. It's okay. You get to keep opening the door.

Christy Keating 38:08

Yeah, I think that's an important point is that if you have a kid who is a little more closed off, or private, it doesn't necessarily mean that you've done something wrong. Like, right, it just might mean that's the personality of that kid. But it does still mean, we have to keep showing up with the possibility and the opportunity and the openness. So that when they do realize, I can't handle this by myself. Yeah, they know, there's somewhere to turn. Yeah, yeah. And I think about those parents. And like, in that situation, if your kid doesn't come to you with a lot, and then all of a sudden, they come to you with a big thing. And you have like no idea that stuff is happening. That is a time when it might be particularly hard to step into that calm space and that curiosity. Because we'll be like what, you know, I mean, and yet almost more important, because they're clearly something big enough that art has finally come to us, right?

Casey O'Roarty 39:17

Yeah. And one thing I'll say, because you initially had asked about curiosity, and I kind of went somewhere else. Curiosity is not asking why. Like, I would encourage all of you listening to just drop the why. And instead lean into how, what, when, right, because why? It's hard to ask, Why did you do that? Why do you think that happened? With it not coming across as there's a right answer here. And if Yeah, and if that's how the kiddo feels, they're not. That's not a safe, that's not a safe step in that Yeah. So, you know, if you can't stand it, you know, just make sure you're asking why less often right? And don't be surprised when they are like, I don't know. Because a lot of times when kids are in the thrill of the moment, they're dysregulated. Right dysregulation isn't always just angry. dysregulation is also when we're in euphoria. Yep. Right? When we're having these big emotional experiences, and we think, yeah, let's do that. That sounds like a great idea, right? And then they're back to their logical brain. And you ask the logical brain, like, why did you do that? They're like, I don't know. And that's the truth because they weren't connected. Yep, the prefrontal cortex, they were connected to the limbic system. And that's, there's no logic there.

Christy Keating 40:51

It's true for us as adults to write when we are just regulated. You know, if somebody asked me, like, now in my rational brain, like, why I lost my shit about something and why I said what I said, when I was up, I don't know, because I wasn't rational. I wasn't. I wasn't in my rational brain. And I think we forget sometimes that our experiences aren't all that different from our kids, but we sort of put this boundary. And really we get into those irrational dysregulated spaces, too.

Casey O'Roarty 41:25

Yeah. One of my favorite back pocket comments, because there's a lot of times where it's like, oh, God, I don't know what to say. And parents will say that to me, like sometimes, you know, I just don't know what to say. If you find yourself in that situation, one of my favorite things to say is, tell me more about that. Yeah. Right, tell me That'll buy you some time. Plus, it'll give you some more information, you get to set the stage that I'm curious, I'm here, I'm not judgmental, I want to know more. Like you're sending all sorts of messages with that one little statement.

Christy Keating 42:06

So put that in your back pocket is such a good one to have in your back pocket. And I have to tell you this story, because just last night, my husband was working late. And so we have three dogs, which is ridiculous. And then snoring behind me. So listeners if you hear weird noises, my dog, but it's difficult to walk all through by myself. So my teenage daughter walked the dogs with me for our evening walk. And we were you know, we were chit chatting about a whole bunch of stuff. And we got into a discussion about social media. And the details of the conversation are really important. But at one point, I said, Tell me more about that mace. And she was like, Yeah, what do you want? When you ask that question? She's like, I feel like you're looking for, like, not just asking you to tell me more about it. Because I don't know, kind of where your head's at. Well, and Natalie, that question often?

Casey O'Roarty 43:05

I know, I know. Well, and I think even that is a great place for us to laugh at ourselves, and to look at our kiddos and say, Oh, that's an annoying, that's an annoying question to you. Like, that's my back pocket question. You know, like, like, we can keep it real. Totally, you know, and I love doing that with my kids or saying something and realizing like, oh, that rubbed you the wrong way. Like, tell me about what that why that bugged you? Yeah. Like how can I do better? truly curious. Right?

Christy Keating 43:39

Well, and I did laugh at myself. And at the end as we're coming in the door, I was like, so Honey, did I just ask you a bunch of questions that just annoyed you? She's like, Yeah, mom. Sorry.

Casey O'Roarty 43:56

So we, you know, my daughter and online dating, right? The dating apps. I am fascinated. And my favorite thing is when she's willing to she's not on an app right now, because she's dating someone, but when we can sit down on the couch, and she lets me like, and we I mean, I could spend hours with her just going through swiping, swiping. What do you think about oh, why do you like that guy? Oh, he's kind of old. Oh, right. Like all having those conversations were side by side. I get to ask her like, what is it? Why is he you know, why is he uh, yes. What is it about the profile that you like? And it's so fun and the same with their, you know, granted, I will say it was only recently that she, I she was driving me somewhere and I had her phone in my hand and I was looking at something and she said, God, you know, this is the first time ever that you holding and looking at my phone isn't giving me a panic attack. It's like, oh, progress, not because she had crazy things. on her phone, but just the I mean, she would she would get so tweaky if I was picking up her phone, she held that close. She was like a poker player.

Christy Keating 45:10

Yeah, yeah. Oh my goodness. You know, I think I love this conversation. And I just keep coming back to this place of whatever your back pocket question is. And the one you know, tell me more about that is actually a great question. And it happened last night, it was irritating my kid. But like, whatever that back pocket question is, or whatever questions you kind of dig into, aside from the Why Why the fuck did you do that? That place of curiosity is an I said this or it's more it's become one of my very favorite if not my favorite parenting tool, because it it helps ground me in right. Yeah. And there are times when my husband will even remind me and I'll be like, Babe, let's let's go in with curiosity here before, right? And it has that has been sort of my cue. Just remembering that word even to do the shoulders back, feel the ground take a deep breath kind of moment. That I you know, my choice here is curiosity and connection or judgment and shutting down. And when I can remember, I will always choose that curiosity and connection piece. Yeah, I don't always remember. But I try. Yeah. You see.

I am so grateful to you for having this conversation and sort of shedding some light and some reality on what parents and teens are dealing with right now. Where can people find you?

Casey O'Roarty 46:46

Well, you can find me in all the places I'm joyful, underscore courage on Instagram. joyful. Courage is the name of my podcast. So you can listen to my show which Christie has been on, anywhere you listen to this show, including my website, the website, where you can find me is be sproutsocial.com. And you can get to the teen stuff by slash teens. So be spreadable.com/teens. That's the company that I'm a founder with, with my partners, Julieta Skoog and Alana Beebe, I have a free Facebook group where we talk about all this stuff called joyful courage for parents of teens, joyful courage is on Facebook as well. So those are the places

Christy Keating 47:35

We will make sure that all of those links are in the show notes. And I will just say I am in that Facebook group. And I learned so much.

Casey O'Roarty 47:44

It's so good. I'm so proud of it. It's it's just so it's such a compassionate, vulnerable space. I'm really proud of all the parents that are in the yeah,

Christy Keating 47:52

as you should be as you should be. Thank you for being here and being on the heartfelt parent podcast. And I know we'll talk again,

Casey O'Roarty 48:00

Totally, thank you so much. Thank you, listeners.

Christy Keating 48:03

Oh, y'all, I hope you got so much out of that conversation with Casey. I know I did. I learned something new from her every time she and I talk, whether it's me being on her podcast or her now making her first appearance on The Heartful Parent Podcast. There's just good heartfelt stuff there to dig into. I hope you enjoyed it.

As always, if you are getting value out of this podcast do me two favors, one, share it with another parent. Let them know that you've stumbled upon a resource that is valuable to you and that they might get value out of into I always appreciate those reviews I you know, I read them I work hard to make this the best podcast and get the best content out there for you that I can so like it subscribe it, give it five stars, share your thoughts. Love to hear them.

Thanks so much. And I'll see you next week with another episode of The Heartful Parent Podcast.

See ya.