Relational Parenting

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[0:00] So evening everybody. This is not my normal audience. So my normal audience are people about this big. And one-on-ones with teachers, one-on-ones with parents and sometimes parent workshops.

So I feel a little bit out of my comfort zone, but the topic that I'm speaking about I'm very secure in. So hopefully that will come across clearly. But let's start off. Why don't you raise your hands if you want to be the best parent that you can be.
Okay, well that's good to know that everybody does. Leave your hand up if you know everything there is to know about being the best parent. Excellent. So Meeks, you can go sit and have some tea. But the rest of us are here because we want to know.
So parenting is such an awesome privilege that God has given us. It's one of the most important works that we can do while we're here on earth. But like all the important work that there is to do, we have to learn how to do it.
It doesn't come naturally. We don't get born with the natural ability to do it. And so we have to learn. And so tonight we are going to look at some key principles on how we can parent better in a truly relational way with our children.
[1:16] And to do that, we're going to seek to understand their brains a little bit better and our brains as well. So to start off, we need to consider where our current parenting style comes from, what it is, and also where it comes from.

So one of the sources of our parenting style comes from our own parents, the way we were raised. And so I'm sure we all have phrases in our head that either we hear coming out of our mouths that we can hear our own moms and dads saying.
So why don't you just shout out some of those? Because I said so. Life is just not fair. Anything else?
Anyone else? Want to be brave? When you're old enough. Okay, because I told you. When I was your age, just wait until your father gets home.
Right. Now, our parents were doing the best they could. And not all of what they did was bad. A lot of, I mean, we're all sitting here today. So some of what they did was obviously good. And in fact, better than a lot of parents today, they understood the idea of authority in the home.
[2:36] We knew who was boss in our homes. We would never dream of speaking back to our parents, as many children do today. But sadly, some of that, and in some homes, the reason that we would not dare to speak back was not for the right reason.

We respected our parents. And in some cases, that respect was because of fear and not of trust. It was fear because we feared the consequence that would come if we didn't listen.
Or feared the consequence that would come if we did speak back to them. So in many households, our generation, the children that we were, grew up with autocratic parents.
Parents who demanded obedience. And it was obedience just because I said so. And so the result of that, autocratic parents are children who grew up with anxiety, levels of anxiety.
And we grew up creating fear bonds. Now, fear bonds are not necessarily a bad thing. So I'll explain what those are. A fear bond is you should not play in the road.
[3:50] Because if you play in the road, you're going to get run over by a car. So you are going to create a sense of fear in your children so that they do not run in the road. Again, do not touch a plug socket because you're going to get shocked.

When your little toddler goes there, you might smack their hand or say no in a stern voice. That's creating a fear bond because you don't want them to get electrocuted. Playing with a snake.

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If you see a snake, you want there to be a fear bond within your child so that they know not to play with a snake. So fear bonds are good in the right circumstance. But fear bonds should never be in our everyday parenting.
Now, some of us, not all of us, but some of us would have grown up in homes where it was a bad experience. Our parents were not good parents.
And so we have grown up not wanting to be anything like our parents. And so we will look elsewhere to find out how to parent. Where do we look? In books.
[4:52] Self-help books. Sometimes written by Christians. Sometimes not. And we will start to take on the culture of the day. So we'll take on parenting from those that are around us.

Whether that's in the Christian community or our school community. Our friendship groups. We will learn parenting from those around us. From the society around us. And so today, we live in a generation of helicopter parents.
Has anyone heard that terminology before? Yes? No? Right? Helicopter parents are parents who hover. So just like a helicopter hovers over. These are parents who never let their children out of their sight.
So partly because of the society we live in. But also partly because they just don't want them to get into trouble. They don't want them to get hurt. So these poor little children are never allowed to explore.
Never allowed to climb to the top of a jungle gym. Heaven forbid they should climb a tree. Because they might fall and hurt themselves. Another common thing in today's society are parents who place their children on a pedestal.
[6:00] And so in the home, everything that happens is surrounded or is organized around the children. It's organized for the children.

The parents are there. They see themselves as there to serve their children. With that comes parents who just want to be their child's friend.
They can't see a distinction. And so these parents are hesitant to scold their children for fear, their own fear, that their child will no longer love them.
They make excuses for their children's poor behavior. I'm sure we all have witnessed things like this. Oh, he's just so tired to excuse a tantrum or some rude behavior.
He's so little, we can't expect much more from him. Or, oh, shame, he's just shy. So I'm sure we all would have heard those excuses from parents.
[7:03] The result of that kind of parenting is that these children are going to grow up insecure. They grow up with very few boundaries, but that means they don't know where to be.

They don't know how to function in society when they get older because they don't have mom and dad standing next to them to hold their hands and guide them through or to make excuses for them when things go wrong.
Now, hopefully we are here because we are Christian parents. And so we would not be looking at those sources, but we would rather be looking to the Bible.
But when we look to the Bible for guidance, where do we find it? And when we do find it, how do we interpret it and how do we apply it? So Nick mentioned a passage and Dylan mentioned some passages earlier as well.
Nick mentioned a passage earlier today which said, Fathers, don't stir up anger in your children, but bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord. So great, we can make that into a fridge magnet, stick it up on our fridge, but what does it mean?
[8:13] How do we not stir up anger in our children? How do we train them and instruct them in the way of the Lord? And so I am grateful that there was a woman in the 1800s, late 1800s.

Her name was Charlotte Mason. She grew up in an area around the Lake District called Ambleside. And she was a Christian.
She was an Anglican. And she realized that there was something missing. And so she spent majority of her life reading, researching and writing a philosophy of education based on the Bible.
And so we can now use that to know how to parent better. She took principles from the Bible, biblical principles for life, for everyday life.
And she's applied them in a practical way of how we can parent better and parent in a way that is honoring to God. And so tonight we're going to look at just a small portion of that.

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[9:18] There are six volumes to her philosophy of education. So much truth. It's rich and it's beautiful. But we're going to focus on just one small section tonight.

And so we're going to look at a better way of training in habit. We're going to see how to practically apply some of these principles.
And we're going to have a case study at the end to help us to identify what those points are. So hopefully if we can look at it from all sides, we'll go away with something in our memories.
So on your little pieces of paper, as we're going through, if you have a question, please won't you write it down. I'm going to be stopping at several points where I will pause and then give you an opportunity to ask a question that's relevant to that section.
So we can kind of get it solidified and also so that I don't then go on to the next when you haven't understood where we are. So have a pen out if you need it and write those questions down.
[10:20] So to start, we need to understand the difference between and a distinction between discipline and punishment.

So when we think of discipline today, punishment is what comes to mind. So being grounded or getting a hiding or writing out lines at school. But I want to give you a new way of thinking of discipline.
So punishment is reactive. Punishment looks back. It looks back to the mistake that's already been made and deals with it.
Discipline needs to be proactive. It needs to look forward. And so it is preparing before the mistake happens in the hope to prevent the mistake happening at all.
So Bill Sincere is the founder of Ambleside Schools International, which my school belongs to, and he puts it really well. He says this, Discipline is what should happen prior to failure to ensure that failure does not happen.
[11:32] So is that clear? The distinction between punishment and discipline. When Charlotte Mason speaks about discipline, this is what she is speaking of.

She describes discipline as a discipleship. It comes from the same root of disciples. So discipline is discipleship. It is a blessing if it is done well.
And it is about forming good character through intentional cultivation of habits. So she says it like this. Habits are formed definitely and thoughtfully, whether habits of mind or habits of body.
But what does Charlotte Mason mean by habit? So she says this. Habit is to life what rails are to transport cars.
So in the 1800s, they didn't have cars like we do. They didn't have tarred roads like we do. So if you can picture a horse-drawn carriage with those big wagon wheels going along a dirt road or a sandy road, the first time it goes along the track, it might be a little bit wobbly.
[12:42] It's kind of forging a new way. The next time it goes down that same road, it might find the same pathway. If it repeats that same route over and over again, it's eventually going to forge deep gouges in the road until eventually the wagon automatically slots into those gouges and travels the same route each time.

Habits are exactly like that. The first time we do something, our brain sends a message to either another part of our brain or to a part of our body, and it opens up a neural pathway.
The next time we do that same action, it's going to fire off another message down the same pathway. Again, another message down the same pathway. And so the more we do something, the easier it becomes for us to default to that action.
If you could picture those neural pathways firing as a little light, and the more they fire down the same pathway, that pathway gets brighter and brighter, and an old pathway that is neglected would start to fade.
And eventually, the new pathway, that bright pathway, becomes the automatic route for our actions.
So do you remember riding a bike for the first time?
[14:04] Who could get on a bike and ride it straight away? Anyone? No? Do you remember learning to write your name? Did you pick up the pencil and could automatically write your name?

No. All of those things we had to practice. The first time we had to do them, it took mental effort. We had to think about which foot was on which pedal, which, you know, this foot's up, this foot's down, I need to push with this foot first.
Everything took mental effort. When we were writing our name, how do I hold my pencil? Which muscles must engage? What's the first stroke to my name? Is it a straight line? Is it a curved line?

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We had to think really hard. But eventually, now, when we write our name, do we think about it at all? Or does it happen automatically? When we get on a bicycle, our muscles know which ones need to engage.
We don't have to think about it anymore. So I'm going to admit something which might end me up getting in trouble. But I'm hoping that somebody else can identify.
[15:06] I have on occasion been in my car, driving somewhere, have got there, and then realized I actually don't remember how I got here. I'm glad to see lots of people nodding.

Now, that's not because our brains were not engaged, and we were driving recklessly. The reason is because we were driving a route that we know really well. And so our brains knew what to do. And so we could switch off. We weren't switched off, but we were consciously switched off. Our brains had formed those neural pathways, and that route was a habit.
And so we didn't have to think about it. Now, this idea of forming habits by forming neural pathways in our brain is what we are working towards to be able to build character in our children.
This is what we are working towards for physical and thought habits of behavior in our children. But how? How do we do that?
[16:11] How do we form those neural pathways? For positive change of habits in our children, we need to start somewhere that is going to be a little bit tricky.

We have to start in changing the habits in ourselves, in us as parents. So as parents, you'll be happy to know we make two major mistakes, just two.
The first one is that we usually discipline out of emotion. I'm sure we can identify with that. And we tend to discipline reactively.
We discipline after the fact instead of before. And so in the rest of our time tonight, we're going to be looking at four principles. I don't have a piece of paper with me to read them off.
But the first one is building a positive relational alliance. Second is sowing potent ideas. The third, providing proactive support.
[17:13] And the fourth is ensuring natural consequences. And so I'm going to unpack each of those a little bit. And I'll give you a chance at the end of each one to ask any questions for clarity.

So if I'm saying something and it's really not clear, you'll have a chance. Just write the question down. And then at the end of all four, we'll have a little bit of a case study, a story which we're going to listen to, try and apply them.
And then at the end, I'd like a few of you just to share a principle that stands out particularly to you and why it has stood out to you. So keep that in the back of your mind that there'll be a little bit of back and forth.
And then if there's time and it's not too dark, then we'll have some Q&A; at the end. So let's set off. I'm just going to get some water. So our first principle is building a positive relational alliance.
So that sounds very fancy. What does it mean? So for this, we need to understand the place of authority in the home.
[18:30] Authority. Does this mean that I can be a dictator and I can demand respect and obedience from my children because I am the mom or because I am the dad?

Yes? No. No. Sorry, Dylan. It doesn't mean that. We're going to look to the Bible for our definition of what authority is and what it should look like.
So right at the beginning of the Bible in Genesis, we hear about God's order of authority. I'm sure many of you can quote it to me. We have God in authority over man, in authority over creation.
So hopefully, later in the Bible, that's developed further into what authority should look like in our homes. And we have God, who is in authority over man, who is in authority over his wife, who are together in authority over their children, who all together are in authority over creation.
So if we think about that order of authority, authority is not something that we earn because of our position or because we learn how to be an authority.
[19:44] And so if it is not earned, it is not something that we can do with as we please or use as we wish. We have been authorized. God has put us into that place of authority.

And so we need to act in such a way that recognizes God's authority over us. We cannot be an autocrat because we have someone in authority above us.
And we cannot have our child in authority over us because we understand God's position of authority and his order of authority. Because of this, we need to stand firmly in that authority that has been granted to us.

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And we need to do that by showing that we ourselves are under authority, under God's authority, and that we care too much about our children to allow them to continue in their poor behavior or in their bad habits.
Once you and your children have a correct perspective on authority, then you can start to build a relationship that is based on respect, mutual respect, a relationship of love and a relationship of trust.
[21:04] And when you have that, then you have no need to revert to one where obedience is demanded through fear. We also need to understand that our authority is not for our benefit.

God has not put us in authority for us to benefit from it. He has put us in authority for our children to benefit from it in the same way that God is in authority to benefit us.
And our children need to know that. When they know that, that is when we have a positive relational alliance. Our children can be confident that we are there for their best.
That we are for them. Children pick up very quickly when we are doing something to make our own lives easier and when we do not have their best interests at heart.
Because I told you to versus because this is what's going to be best for you. We need to think of our own motivations behind what we do as parents.
[22:20] Are we doing it for our own sanity? Or are we doing it because we are molding our children to be better people for the future? Am I saying this or doing it to make myself feel better?

Or am I doing it to make them better followers of Jesus or better members of society one day? We need to check our motives. And we need to ensure that we are speaking to our children out of a genuine desire to see them grow rather than a desire to restore our own emotions to a happy neutral.
Now, this is hard. It's really hard. But we can do it. And we can do it because we have the Holy Spirit. And so sometimes in the situation we might need to just pause and pray and then continue. But we can do it. Our character needs to be shaped and molded first by his spirit before we can shape and mold the characters of our children.
Charlotte Mason describes character as one's propensity to respond to a given situation in a certain way. So, we have to be real.
[23:44] We have to ask ourselves what our default habits are. Is my default habit to shout at my children? Is it to lash out in frustration because my brain is firing off?

Is my default to belittle my children to feel better about myself? We need to consider what our children are seeing in us before they can trust in that relational alliance that is going to shape their behavior into being better and into being more God-honoring.
If we want our children to be truthful, are we being truthful? If we want them to have a positive attitude to their chores in the home, what is our attitude towards our responsibilities in the home? And what is our attitude towards our work in front of them? Now, we don't need to be perfect. We are never going to be perfect. But we must be honest.
They know when we're not being honest. They know us better than we think they do. They see us every single day. And they see if we are truly being for them or if we are being for ourselves.
[25:06] Only when we are at a place where we have mutual respect and love and trust with our children are we going to be able to form good habits in them.

So this is a place to pause. Does this make sense, this positive relational alliance? And if not, how can I help?
Are there any questions? Yes. Thank you.
Yeah. Yeah. As you were speaking, I was just thinking it's also helpful to not think of your child as the age they're at when you're forming these habits. Because parenting is not to raise children. It's to raise adults. And so when you're doing something, when you're thinking of a particular habit, you're doing it because you want them to be good members of society, not because you want them to be good five-year-olds or good six-year-olds.
[26:18] So you're thinking long-term. Parenting is long-term. Because eventually you won't be around anymore. Right. So we understand positive relational alliance.

Sewing potent ideas. That's our next step. So put your hand up if you remember being told to do something, but you didn't really understand why.
You were told to do it because I said so, or you just do as you're told. Did anybody hear that growing up? Right.

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I think probably all of us. Now, that might have got you to obey the first time in that moment, but did it instill an idea in you and a desire in you to always do that?
No. So it did not sow an idea. Sowing an idea in children is having them see the reason behind the behavior is not about mom or dad, and it might not even be about them.
[27:33] It's an idea that is outside of themselves. So to give you an example, not speaking loudly in the library, this is not because we need a place and a time where we can rest our voices.

It's also not necessarily because the librarian is scary and told me that I need to be quiet, although in some libraries that might be true. The reason behind that is outside of ourselves.
It's because there are other people in the library, and they have come to work or to read peacefully and quietly, and so together we help each other by all speaking in quiet voices.
They understand the reason behind the instruction, and when they understand the reason behind the instruction, it's easier for them to obey. Now, the same comes with a change in your child's behavior.
You are going to be in a happy place of calm. That does happen in most households, I hope. When you're in this happy place of calm, you have a conversation where you can share an idea which is particular to a habit that you are wanting to form in your child.
[28:51] So again, I'm going to give you an example. You've noticed that your child leaves their clothes on the floor every time they get changed, whether that be in their bedroom or the bathroom.

And so you sit them down calmly, quietly one afternoon, and you say to them, so I've noticed that you seem to be in the habit of when you get unchanged, you leave your clothes on the floor, even when they're not dirty, and you could actually wear them again.
What happens to the clothes when you leave them on the floor? Well, hopefully they will respond with, well, they get dirty or they get creased, and so I have to put them in the wash.
So have you ever considered the time and the effort that it takes mom or dad to do the washing every week? No.
Most children would be like, no, I've never thought about that before. So do you think that your action of taking your clothes off and leaving on the floor, does that make mom or dad's job harder or easier?
[29:58] Well, it would make it harder. So do you think that there's a way that you could help to make mom and dad's job easier? Well, yeah.

I could pick up my clothes and put the dirty ones in the wash, and I could put the clean ones in my cupboard. So you have now, through that conversation, planted an idea that leaving their clothes on the floor is not actually just about them.
It affects something outside of themselves. Versus, pick up your clothes off the floor, where they might do it once, but are they going to remember the next time?
No. This idea that you plant, which is outside of themselves, is what they need to be thinking about as they are developing this new habit.
So now, you've had this calm, pleasant conversation, and you've shared this amazing idea. Now your child is never going to throw their clothes on the floor.
[31:02] We obviously know that's not the case, and so that's why we need the third stage in our steps of principles. But does the second step make sense?

Sewing this potent idea. Any questions from that section? Nothing. Wonderful. Good students you are. Right. So providing proactive support. So our children, believe it or not, don't always intentionally disobey us as parents.
I'm sure we have all heard the phrase, I forgot. Yes? Most of the times, not all, but most of the time when they say, I forgot, it's because they actually genuinely did forget.
Their minds are full of all sorts of other things, and they did just forget. Our job as parents is to help them remember. So we might first demonstrate to them, what does this look like?
This habit that we're training them in, what does it look like? We might do it together with them a few times. We can practice. Okay, so let's drop your clothes on the floor.
[32:16] How are you going to pick them up? Let's practice it a few times. Make sure they know how to fold those clothes so that they can put them away in their cupboard properly. In the beginning, you might remind them when you're coming home from school, remember, when you're getting unchanged, what are you going to do with your clothes?

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I'm going to fold them, and I'm going to put them in my cupboard. Again, after they've got changed, did you remember to fold your clothes and put them in the cupboard? You can continue with that for a little bit of time.
Eventually, you're working towards where you can just say to them, do you remember what we're working on? The idea is to get them to do the thinking. If you continually say to them, pick up your clothes when you get changed, who's doing the remembering?
You are, as parents. If you say to them, what are we working on? Or what do you need to remember? Remember, who is having to do the thinking? The child.
So who is forming that neural pathway? They're forming that pathway. Now, you keep doing that, being there to raise them up to remembering, for as long as they need it, until you feel confident that they will be able to do it without your help.
[33:39] But, you still check in. Because if you don't check in, they are going to assume it's not important anymore.

And if it's not important to mom and dad, it doesn't have to be important to me. And so, I'm going to lose that neural pathway and I'm going to form back into my old habit.
Does that make sense? Everyone happy? No questions? Which goes right back to the beginning of we need to start those habits in ourselves.
Yeah, exactly. What they see us do, they're going to do. Okay. So without looking at your notes, can you remember what is the first step?
Positive relational alliance. Second step. Sowing a potent idea. And our third step that we've just done.
[34:46] You're cheating. Third step. Providing a proactive support. Okay. So, we've done all of that. We've built this relational alliance.

We're secure in that relationship of mutual respect. We've sown this potent idea. We're being proactive. We're reminding them. And it all goes horribly wrong. And it all goes horribly wrong. they still do not do as they should. So what then? How do we respond? And that leads us to step four which is ensuring natural consequences.
Now consequences again is something that because of the way we've been brought up we have quite a negative feeling towards consequence that usually involves some pain or boredom or just really not feeling happy.
Natural consequence though is slightly different. So if I can explain what a natural consequence is if I touch a hot stove I'm going to get burned.
[35:54] That's a natural consequence. If I stand in the rain I am going to get wet. Another natural consequence. So a natural consequence has to relate directly to the habit that we are training in.

If they leave their clothes on the floor after we have gone through this whole process and they leave their clothes on the floor a natural consequence would be it's not going to be mom and dad that washes and folds their clothes.
They are going to wash and fold their clothes that they've left on the floor. If I still do not speak quietly in the library after we've gone through this whole process then we can't visit the library until we have practiced being quiet in other places, at home, wherever.
Our consequence must relate to the habit that we're trying to instill. It would make no sense at all for me to say to my children if you leave your clothes on the floor you are going to clean the kitchen. There's no correlation whatsoever. It's not going to reinforce the habit that we're trying to make.
Now at this stage with the natural consequence it's useful it's not necessary but it is very useful depending on the age of your child to involve them in coming up with that appropriate natural consequence.
[37:27] Now they don't know that you've already decided what that consequence is going to be but through conversation and through you guiding them to that point you can get them to decide what that consequence is going to be.

And so when they have been part of that decision making part of that process of finding the natural consequence they're going to own it.
and then it's not a punishment anymore it's just the agreed upon result of them failing to do what they should. And then it's not me making them do it actually it's them making them do it because they've decided on it themselves.

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Does that make sense? Do you need any more clarity on natural consequence? Everyone happy? Right so this sounds like hard work it sounds like more hard work for us doesn't it?
It is hard work I will admit that but learning a habit is hard work think about when you started riding that bike how many times did you have to get on the bike again and again fall off scrape your knee get back on fall off again scrape your knee again get back on how many times did you have to practice writing your name?
[38:47] It was hard work but eventually after much practice it became easy I'm sure Adrian when you're riding your bicycle you don't have to constantly be thinking oh I'm going to fall off my bike it becomes easier the more you do it and so it is the same with these habits we do not need to feel sorry for our children when we are instilling a habit in them eventually it becomes easy the hard work pays off Charlotte Mason says this educate the child in right habits and the man's life will run in them without the constant wear and tear of the moral effort of decision you will be doing your children a favor by teaching them these good habits when they're young and so when they're older they won't have to think about them at all yes can I just ask you especially when it comes to older children are we that you cannot do this one with someone this door keeps mouth and you're not using the devices absolutely absolutely so especially with an older child they shouldn't need your reminding if you say to them you have an hour on screens natural consequences if you go over that hour then you don't get that privilege so with that though

I will put in place that you do need to go through that whole process with them it's not going to be I'm deciding that you don't get to do screens you need to have that conversation so that it comes around as a we have come to this decision together that if you are not able to go to stick to your time limit the next time you would have had screens you're going to lose that privilege because it is a privilege it's not a right you'll lose that privilege and then perhaps the next day you can try again if you fail again then perhaps it needs to be longer that you have it without but you need to come to that decision with them even if you're guiding it so that it comes out as that natural consequence what would you say would be a natural consequence for a child that is answering back within the youth you know like like obnoxious I mean it's you know besides saying don't stick to that you know what I mean like what would be an actual consequence you would be well so our homes are kind of the practice ground for how we are in society and so if our children are not able to speak respectfully to the people in our own home we don't want to let them out into the rest of the world and so a natural consequence to them not being able to speak politely within our home is that I'm not going to be able to let you go into someone else's home because I don't know how you're going to speak to their parents and so until we can speak respectfully we're not going to be able to have playdates with other people until I can see that you're ready so because speaking to an adult or speaking to anyone is relational then the natural consequence would be to limit a relationship does that make sense?
I'm not the be all and end all of these so natural consequences might be different to each person so I'm just giving what I would do in my home when does?
yeah so so so I would say probably by the time they're 15 if you've kind of missed the mark with a rod because by that age by kind of teenage age a rod becomes like a hiding becomes more about a kind of a crossing barrier of respect because they're now in their minds they're young men and women and so I would say hidings are great for little kids because it's it is a natural consequence for disobeying a parent when they're not able to understand other natural consequences but once your child is old enough to go through this process and to think about a natural consequence for themselves then it needs to fit it needs to fit the crime needs to fit the habit that you're trying to instill what I will say though is any time that they have put a life in danger or put somebody else in danger your level of consequence can go up so either putting themselves in danger or putting someone else in danger when they're older that can be much more of a rod yeah so the yeah but what message is it sending what are they learning other than sitting in their rooms going oh my parents are awful because now I can't go to this party or I can't go so that's not really grounding is not really instilling anything other than
I'm resenting my parents right now which is not where we want to be you know if we're building this relational alliance with them we want to show that we're for them and we're for their growth and we're for them becoming good members of society and so the consequence needs to be such that while they're busy with their consequence they are thinking about the habit that they are that we are building in them and sitting in my room when I know the rest of my friends are out partying if the

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reason I'm sitting in my room while the rest of my friends is out partying is because I can't respect my parents that's different because then there's a reason for me not being allowed to go out it's because I am not my parents can't trust me yet to be engaging with other adults or other people yeah so as long as it must pertain to the habit that you are training okay so lock it lock it so that they can't access your computer put a password on it so they can't access it make your password harder you know yeah it is a tricky one
[45:57] I'm trying to think off the top of my head what I would what I would do in that situation but as long as they do that they would not have access to any device in my home at all then they would never get their phone back if they are going into my property after I've told them that they can't they would not have access to any device then that would be my ruling for a long time a month at least nothing if I can't trust you with a device that I give you and I can't trust you to stay off mine then you just have nothing for a long time till you can practice respecting my property or you leave home and you're not my responsibility anymore yeah it is a tricky one but I would say you know as parents we're also responsible to know that our children are sinners they're not going to be obedient all of the time and so we do need to put things in place where like that put a hard uncrackable password on your computer have a password on your wifi that they don't know so they can't access internet without you you know

I speak to a lot of parents at school who they're like I don't know what to do my child is accessing this and accessing that I'm like stop their access you have the control take it away yes but if they don't have a device yeah yeah yeah yeah and you can see what they can you can see exactly what they're accessing at any time so it's useful yeah so as clever as our children are there are people out there in the IT world who are even cleverer than our children so I'm sure they've come up with ways to overcome what they are doing what our children are doing can we pause on this we'll have another time of
Q&A; afterwards but we're going to listen to a story I'm going to ask Dylan to come up and read it with me so this is a story about a mom and a son so it is written by Charlotte Mason so it was written in 1800 and something so forgive the slightly more proper way of speaking I guess but Dylan's going to read this next section I will be the mom and he will be the kid you're the kid well you're the narrator and the kid to choose a habit of no great consequence except as a matter of consideration for others the mother wishes her child to acquire the habit of shutting the door after him when he enters or leaves a room tact watchfulness and persistence are the qualities she must cultivate in herself and with these she'll be astonished at the readiness with which the child picks up the new habit
Johnny she says in a bright friendly voice I want you to remember something with all your might never go into or out of a room in which anybody is sitting without shutting the door but if I forget mother I will try to remind you but perhaps I shall be in a great hurry you must always make time to do that but why mother because it is not polite to the people in the room to make them uncomfortable but if I'm going out again that very minute still shut the door when you come in you can always open it again to go out do you think you can remember try mother very well and I shall watch to see how few forgets you make so for two or three times Johnny remembers and then he is off like a shot and halfway down the stairs before his mother has time to call him back she does not cry out
Johnny come back and shut the door because she knows that a summons of that kind is exasperating to big or little she goes to the door and calls pleasantly Johnny Johnny has forgotten all about the door he wonders what his mother wants and stirred by curiosity comes back to find her seated and employed as before she looks up glances at the door and says I said I should try to remind you oh I forgot says Johnny put upon his honour and he shuts the door that time and the next and the next but the little fellow has really not much power to recollect and the mother will have to adopt various little devices to remind him but of two things she will be careful that he never slips off without shutting the door and that she never lets the matter be a cause of friction between herself and the child taking the line of his friendly ally to help him against that bad memory of his by and by after saying twenty shuttings of the door with never any omission the habit begins to be formed
[51:30] Johnny shuts the door as a matter of course and his mother watches him with light come into her room shut the door take something off the table and go out and shut the door again now we get to this dangerous stage now that Johnny always shuts the door his mother's joy and triumph

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begins to be mixed with unreasonable pity poor child she says to herself it is very good of him to take so much pains about a little thing just because he is bid she thinks that all the time the child is making an effort for her sake losing sight of the fact that the habit has become easy and natural that in fact Johnny shuts the door without knowing that he does so now comes the critical moment someday Johnny is so taken up with a new delight that the habit not yet fully formed loses its hold and is halfway downstairs before he thinks of the door then he does think of it with a little prick of his conscience strong enough not to send him back but to make him pause a moment to see if his mother will call him back she has noticed the omission and is saying to herself poor little fellow he's been very good about it this long time

I'll let him off this once he outside fails to hear his mother's call says to himself fatal sentence oh it doesn't matter and trots off next time he leaves the door open but he's not a forget his mother calls him back in a rather feeble way his quick ear catches the weakness of her tone without coming back he cries oh mother I'm in such a hurry and she says no more but lets him off again he rushes in leaving the door wide open Johnny in a warning voice I'm going out again just in a minute mother and after ten minutes rummaging he does go out forgets to shut the door the mother's mistimed easiness has lost forever has lost for her every foot of the ground she had gained thank you just so far so in that story which is a little bit comical because I don't think any of us ever shut our doors when we go in or out of a room but we get the idea let's identify those four steps just in a practical way so feel brave shout out what was our first stage first step positive relational alliance so where did you see that in the story when she spoke to him and explained to him why he's important to him how it is okay so you've already gone into that second part what is the sowing of the potent idea right so the idea outside of himself what is he going to be thinking about our next stage yeah her consistency so if you're at the beginning part the habits that she needed to form which we all do is tact so in how we speak about it watchfulness we need to be aware and persistence we need to keep at it all the time the fourth stage natural consequence was it there was it so what was the natural consequence before she lost it before that dangerous stage what was the natural consequence right so he was on a mission outside but he had to pause his mission come back close the door and then go out natural consequence okay so the natural consequence of having to come back to close the door is reinforcing
I need to close the door I need to remember to close the door I must remember to close the door so natural consequence now it all fell apart was it the child's fault that it fell apart why did it fall apart yeah so Charlotte Mason calls it unreasonable pity so we pity our children we think I think it actually said it in there we think it's such hard work to keep this habit up but by that stage it really wasn't a mission for him to close the door and so we we have unreasonable pity for our children we think our shame it's hard for them we make excuses for them and because we are not persistent our children fall out of the habit and that then causes us frustration and then it's going to be ten times harder to try and build that habit again afterwards so persistence is key so if I can ask some of you to be open and honest what is a principle that has stood out for you in the formation of habits or a part of that principle that you've been most struck by so that's where an appropriate fair bond would come in speak about actual cases of children going missing that's a serious thing it's a good fair bond for them to build but as you know that's where that's why the process starts with the relational alliance because you spoke a lot about respect and breaking trust you can't go anywhere until that the positive relational alliance is in place with any habit so you're right you do need to deal with the relational aspect first before you can deal with anything else yep yep you can't do any of the rest because you can sow an idea but unless you're in that place of relationship they're going to go okay you know why is that idea so important why must I listen to you and listen to that idea if I don't respect you yeah yeah yeah so a good natural a good natural consequence for that is once you've had that conversation is you know do you think it's fair for whoever whatever her name is to have to tidy up we've done this in our own home use this natural consequence already do you think that's fair you know she's here to clean she's not here to tidy or to pick up your clothes and so if your room is like that on the
day that she arrives then your door will get closed and it won't get cleaned and you will then have to clean it because the rest of the house is clean so you will need to tidy and clean your room natural consequence I think the natural consequence I guess you tend to find what is the phrase that people use currency you know what's your currency and to most kids it's quite high screen and so we've used that now the interesting one we had with that was this towel in the bar so you get out of

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the bar the towel on the floor so we had to come and I realized now in my time we followed along those steps and it's like you can't give your towel on the floor it's going to be horrible and gross tomorrow when you know and so then you you know you must pick your towel okay and then remind you that you pick your towel but then there was eventually we got to the continent stage now we use screen time so forget the towel next day you don't have screen time and then there was you come out the bathroom and you go
I wonder if Matthew remembered and you turn around and shoot oh yeah I did that cool so we weren't using the natural consequence in that scenario yeah yeah so if I can make a comment on that this is another quote what we draw children with is what we draw them to and so if we take away their currency whether that be screens or friends or whatever we're making that the important thing we're saying screens is the important thing I'm going to make you do an unimportant thing to get the important thing but actually we want to be teaching our children that not leaving your towel on the floor is an important thing and so we want to draw them with that to show them that that's actually important because you're not only just training them to not leave their towel on the floor you're teaching them courtesy for their mom you're teaching them courtesy for the person who comes to clean their house you're teaching them more than just not putting their towel on the floor where yeah so what you draw them with is what you draw them to so bear that in mind when you're thinking of a consequence what are you making important in that scenario it's a tricky one because let me go back to the domestic the one that he was coming it was lego all over his floor and he got to school and there it was and the domestic was coming so I came up and I sat there thinking well do I give him a lego band or take away his lego for a week or something actually I brought him to play lego than on devices so I took his device
[63:22] I brought him to play lego than device but yeah it's a tricky one to get the right balance and find the right but again the question is so you not to pick on you Adrian but in your sentence you said it had to get cleaned up but did it yeah I suppose she couldn't even the room could have got there so you could have just closed the door and said to her you get a free room you don't have to do this room today and the thing that you would have said to him when he came home and he went why is my room not cleaned was well did you leave it in a state where so and so could clean your room no well I didn't get clean after the conversation we said to him it's on the floor and I come into the room it's going in there so you won't do it because if I get in there everything that's on the floor is gone

I would struggle to fight Yemen would ■ out of there will know I could let me Toy Jail.
Toy Jail, yes. Yeah, I did that too. Yvonne, you had your hand up. Do you know, I'm just going to say, this program is brilliant. And for people like Adrian, it's so young, it's easy to teach him the food habit.
But I also think, you know, I'll talk about, you know, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. When I was in the trick, I think I was in the trick, and we were taught perfectly like that.
And then you had new doctors that came out and said, no, no, like that. That lasts 44 days. So a question I have is, is it possible for people 50, in this case 80, still to learn new habits?
[65:42] Yeah, so Charlotte Mason, when she, in the 1800s, she wrote in her volumes about the fact that your brain can change.

The chemistry within your brain can change. Which for much of the early 1900s, scientists were like, your brain is your brain. There's no changing your brain.
If you have this, if you lose your temper, because your father lost his temper, shame, that's just your bad lot. But what Charlotte Mason was all about was the fact that our brains are pliable.
So what now, in the 21st century, scientists are saying, neuroplasticity, our brains can change. We can change our thought patterns. We can change our behaviours.
And so, yes, absolutely. My behaviour has changed in the last three weeks. I now don't automatically put my clothes on a chair. I take them off, and I fold them, and I put them in my cupboard.
[66:42] And that's changed my brain. I have literally changed my brain. So whether you are six or whether you are 60, this works.

You just have to have the commitment to carry it through. So you stopped brushing your teeth in circles because there was no one to say to you, even if you brushed your teeth in circles. Or you didn't make a trigger for yourself to remind yourself to brush your teeth in circles until it was the default.

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And so as adults, it's harder for us, because we don't have a parent, to remind us. We have to find ways to remind us to form those new habits. So use your spouse.
There's a good way. But for children, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, as long as they're in your home, you have the opportunity to change their habits.
Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. But you know, Jean, it all comes back again for me in my mind to, do you respect the people in your house enough to be willing to make the effort to change your life?
[67:54] Yeah. Because, yes, we do have a sense of authority over our children, but even when it comes to stasis, you very quickly will be defensive in the sense that I'm an adult, don't tell them what to do, kind of thing.

And I think that is the thing that we need to remind ourselves of. If, under the authority of God, we have enough respect for God, to listen to God, then we should have enough respect for each other to tolerate it if the other person makes that suggestion that we need to live a certain way to be able to set the model for our children.
We should be able to answer that. And that's it. It is hard. It's hard to be humble. It's hard to admit that we've got faults that we need to change.
Yeah. But not impossible. Yeah. I think when it comes to teenagers and 15, or even 30, sweet time, trying to get them to understand that certain of us keep up and it's bad.
They don't want to hold me in the house. It's very difficult to reverse the... That's your time.
[69:30] Yeah. So, I mean, in that kind of instance, there is a degree of, I've lived life a lot longer than you have. And so, in this instance, I know you don't understand it fully, but I know that it's bad for you.

And I love you too much to let you have four hours of screen time. I know the consequences of too much screen time.
When you're older, you will understand. Now I need you to trust me. Yeah. Yeah.
Yeah. You're right, because... Yeah. Yeah. Exactly.
Yeah. So, how come you not understand? But we're not really good for life. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, shame. They don't have parents that love you as much as I do.
[70:36] You know? Swing it around. So, always think, in that positive relational alliance, think of the mutual respect. So, it's not just that you are...

that your children need to respect you. You also need to respect them and how you speak to them. They are also created in the image of God. They are his children as well.
And so, you need to think about how you speak to them respectfully. You need to speak to them respectfully for them to speak to you respectfully. And love and trust.
So, there are occasions where children must just trust that their parents know better than they do. And that comes when you've built that relational alliance and you get to a point where you do have to have a conversation and say, I've lived a lot longer than you.
I do know these... I do know that this is bad for you and I love you too much to let you carry on like that. You need to trust me that they are in a place because you've built that relationship with them that they can say, okay, I do trust you.
[71:49] Yeah. I think we've reached time for them to step near me. Any other questions? Any other questions? I don'tCHOW I don't have to know what he wants.

I don't know what you have to see but the reality doesn't talk about them it's hard to contact him this is people who made my homework I feel not I don't know I talk about think about something what else episode questions you know

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