

Ep #46: Tools For Working Parents



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kori Linn

[Love Your Job Before You Leave It](#) with Kori Linn

Ep #46: Tools For Working Parents

This week we're talking about tools for working parents.

You are listening to Love Your Job Before You Leave It, the podcast for ambitious, high-achieving women who are ready to stop feeling stressed about work and kiss burnout goodbye forever. Whether you're starting a business or staying in your day job, this show will give you the coaching and guidance you need to start loving your work today. Here's your host, Career Coach, Kori Linn.

Hey y'all, happy Wednesday. It is a beautiful day here in Sacramento. It's gotten a little bit cooler, which is really nice. I like to take long walks in the morning before I start my workday. And even in the thick of summer they're really pretty in the morning, it's cooler. But this week, it's been even cooler. I think maybe like 10 degrees cooler in the morning. And it's just really nice to have a little bit of a chill in the air.

It's only August, but I can already kind of feel the turn we're taking towards fall. And that's pretty exciting. Although since I live in Sacramento, it's also still getting up into like 80s and sometimes 90s in the heat of the day. My morning walks have been, I think it was below 60 when I got up. Probably by the time I got outside it was in the 60s. But that's a nice temperature for a brisk morning walk.

So this week we are talking about a subject that I had someone actually request. So one of my clients is a parent and also a high powered person in her workplace. And she asked me to do a podcast on parenting.

And at first, I was like, "Well, you know, my mentor Cara has a great podcast on parenting, you should listen to that." Which also, everyone you should listen to that it's great episode, we can link it in the show notes.

But my client said she really wanted to hear how I would teach about parenting, and specifically how I would teach about parenting from the lens of this being a podcast that's about work. Because she said that one of the things she wanted most from coaching was to figure out how to be successful in her work while also being the parent she wanted to be.

[Love Your Job Before You Leave It](#) with Kori Linn

Ep #46: Tools For Working Parents

And I'll be honest, I was a little nervous to do this podcast because I don't have children. And as you all know, I have no intention of having them, I talk about that sometimes. And I realize that coaching tools are amazing, and they're very effective.

And I want to call out that sometimes I'm coaching on stuff where I don't have the lived experience. And I'm a human, so I do sometimes get nervous about that.

That being said, I think coaching tools are incredibly helpful for this particular thing. And so we are going to do a whole podcast on it. My client totally convinced me that this is exactly the right thing to talk about on my podcast, and that my people need to hear it and they will benefit from it.

And that's really what I want from the podcast. I want y'all to benefit from it. Whether you come and work with me one on one, like my client I'm talking about. Or whether we never say words to each other in the real world. I'm here for you. And I consider all of you my clients, even if you never come and be my literal client in my business. Just by listening to the podcast, you are my client. As long as you want to be, consent is important.

Okay, so parenting, I think this is such an important topic, even when we're talking about being happy at work. Because a lot of times when people aren't happy at work and they're not satisfied in their career, sometimes it's about stuff that's happening at work and sometimes it's not.

We live in the age where people talk a lot about work life balance, whether that's even a thing, whether it's something we should want to or try to achieve. And I think there are a lot of ways in which that's for all people, but there's some stuff that's particularly for women.

And I just want to say when I say women, I am talking about the broadest definition of the word women. Which means people who identify as women, people who were socialized as women but don't identify as women anymore. People who were socialized as women, but now identify as non-binary, or as male.

Ep #46: Tools For Working Parents

And as I often mention on the podcast, even for people who don't identify as women now or weren't socialized as women, people with other marginalized identities sometimes have some of the same social conditioning that women have. Or their own unique social conditioning that's different but still is also different from kind of the socialization of the CisHet white male.

Also, depending on who socialized you, you may have socialization that usually shows up for another group. So there are CisHet white males who, because of who they were parented by, or where they were socialized and what was going on, may also have thought patterns that I would usually see in women or people with marginalized identities.

So it's really not one size fits all. But I want to talk about the broad socialization because I think that's really important. So the broad socialization of women when it comes to children is that we need to be everything and do it all perfectly. And everything is our job, even if it's literally not our job when it comes to kids.

Women are socialized from a very young age that part of one of our goals in life should be, or maybe even the goal in our life should be, to get married and to have children and to nurture and to caretake, and to make sure everyone's happy. Now, obviously, I don't agree with this socialization, but I just want to lay it out there that that's the socialization that exists.

And again, in some additional identities people may have, they may get even more of that socialization that that's their role. And so when you have a person with this social conditioning who's balancing being a parent and being a worker in whatever way that means they're working.

As we talk about, sometimes on the podcast, like, I do specifically, think about my audience as being people who have jobs like the one that I used to have. So I was like a knowledge worker in tech, in an office. But I have clients who have really different kinds of work.

Ep #46: Tools For Working Parents

I have a client who is a stay at home mom. So I think even though this podcast would apply to her because there's parenting, and there are other things she's doing also as a stay at home mom, and there's still things she's trying to balance. So anyways, we're kind of getting in the weeds here. But I do think it's very broad in what this could look like.

All of that is to say, if we look at the classic example which is the parent working outside the home, what I see a lot is guilt. No matter what they're doing, they don't feel like they're doing enough.

They'll feel like they're failing at work when they're paying attention to their kids. They'll feel like they're failing at being a parent when they're paying attention to their work.

And they'll often pay so much attention to both of those that they don't pay any attention to themselves. And then the things that they actually want to do as a human person, maybe get left by the wayside.

Now, on top of this, there's a lot of shit we could also look at about the breakdown of household management. Especially for people who are in heteronormative relationships. There's a lot of data about how women - Well, no, we're looking at heteronormative right now, so we can say women are taking on more of the household management duties, more of the emotional labor.

And that is about kids, and it's also about lots of other stuff besides just kids. But the thing about kids is, all that other stuff that there is, they tend to like make a lot more of it, right? So if you're negotiating dishes between two people in a household, and now you have two kids, now you're negotiating like four people's worth of dishes. Now you're negotiating four people's worth of laundry. Now you're negotiating four people's worth of food prep. So I think all of this is related.

So one thing there is, it's a lot of work. There's a lot of stuff involved with having children and having a household. And honestly, just being humans

Ep #46: Tools For Working Parents

and keeping ourselves alive. I think a lot of people would have framed this the opposite way. They'd be like, "Oh, it's not that much work, just do this."

I have the opposite point of view. I'm a person who, sometimes I love to cook and feed myself and my partner and it's fun. And I put this on the internet all the time, I'm like, "Oh my God, if I have to feed this fucking meat sack, that's my body, one more time." And when you're having children in your life, in your home, that expands the work you're doing and the work that there is. So that's real.

And I think it's important that we say how real that is. That's not like a made up thing, it is labor. Okay, but I don't think that labor is the problem. I think the problem is the messaging we have inside our own heads because we've absorbed this socialization. We've internalized it and we have this idea of what we should be doing that's literally impossible to meet.

And this really relates to burnout and overwork. And not just in the workplace, but also in your home life. People burn out and overwork at home too. It's not just something we do in the office or on our one thousand Zoom calls, because most of us aren't in the office right now.

Why are we doing this? I think we're doing this because of the socialization and because of the guilt. But here's the thing, we don't stop feeling guilty. I see this with my clients who have kids, they'll do all the things as much as they can and overwork and burnout both at work and at home. Because they have this idea in their head that they're never doing enough, no matter how much they do. And then guess what? They still feel guilty.

So I think it's important to point that out, because then we can see logically this guilt is not helpful. It's not realistic. And it's not based on what we're actually able to do or any kind of realistic standards. Your brain is just going to tell you to be guilty no matter what.

So I think that's important to know because then you can make choices and realize that the guilt isn't a real message. It's just a habit. It's a habit your

Ep #46: Tools For Working Parents

brain has, that it learned from culture of saying you're never doing enough, that has nothing to do with how much you're doing and whether it's enough.

Also, enough is not a real thing. It's a fucking made up thing. And you get to decide what enough is. But you have to do that on purpose because otherwise your brain is going to revert to this socialization it has. And it's always going to say, "Not enough, not enough, if you could just do this one more thing." Okay. That's the guilt piece.

Here's another thing, a lot of people define their success as a parent by what their child is doing. And that is not a good plan. I think this goes without saying but let's just say it, your child is a whole unique person. If you have multiple children, your children are multiple whole unique people with freewill.

As a parent, you can guide them, you can love them, you can have rules for them, you can have conversations with them. You can have consequences for certain kinds of actions that they may or may not take. But when you define your worth based on what they're doing, you're setting yourself up for fucking disaster.

I mean, sometimes it might feel good if they're doing the things you want them to do. But you're defining your worth by something that you can't control, and I just don't think that's a super fun idea. Honestly, I don't really want you to define your success as a person by what you're doing either.

I don't think what we're doing is a great measure for our success as a person. I am much more in the camp of what if you're just worthy because you're a human? And then let's do some shit because it's fun to do some shit. Let's build a business because it's fun to build a business. Let's get a big fucking promotion because it's fun to get a big fucking promotion.

When we're trying to prove our worth and prove our success with our actions, or the actions of our children or anything else, we are hinging our worthiness on something outside of us. It's actually a very capitalist kind of framework. And I would just invite you to not do that shit.

Ep #46: Tools For Working Parents

It's a much more fun way to do things to just decide that you're worthy just because, and so is everyone else, and so are your kids. And then you can still obviously work on the actions you're taking, the actions your kids are taking, you can parent them.

I think that's a great idea, it's pretty much like your job with them. I just don't think that the way I see most people do it, where they're attaching their personal success and worth to their kid's behavior is effective. It also makes you really want to control your children.

And when we want to control something, we're not seeking to understand it, we're not willing to get curious about it. And a lot of times we're not even willing to follow through on the things we said were going to be the consequences, because we're too busy trying to control the thing and make it what we want it to be.

So I'm not really here to tell anyone how to parent because that's totally up to you. It's just like the when should you quit your job, like whenever the fuck you want for whatever reason you want. You get to and ultimately have to make these choices for yourself.

But what I would just like to invite you to see is that it can be a much more satisfying and calm experience of parenting when you're willing to separate your worth as a parent from what your kids are doing and whether or not they're listening to you.

And you can still parent them very effectively from that framework. Like I said before, we can have rules and we can have consequences. It's kind of actually very similar to when we have direct reports at work. We can't actually control them, they have complete free will. If they decide that they're never coming back to the office, we can issue consequences, we can fire them, but we can't actually make them do anything.

And that's how kids are too. I think we lie to ourselves and tell ourselves we can control our children and that we should. And I think that lie gets us in a lot of trouble.

Ep #46: Tools For Working Parents

So here's the thing, if you're not defining your success as a parent by what your kids are doing, or what they're not doing, or whether they're listening, or how they're behaving, or whether they're hitting their milestones or whatever, how are you going to define success? I don't have an answer for you for that. You have to figure that out. That's for you.

That being said, of course I do have some ideas because I was just coaching someone on this and we were talking about like, what is actually your role as a parent? Like at the end of the day, if you can't control this tiny human at all, and they're going to do whatever they're going to do, but you can guide them.

You can teach them, you can love them. You can have conversations with them. You can be curious with them. You can issue consequences to them from love to help them understand your expectations and the way the world works. Who do you want to be? And what do you want to be guided by?

So often I see parents get so wrapped up in what they want the kids to do and how they feel, that they get disconnected from who they actually want to be as a parent and what emotional fuel they want to use to run their parenting.

So a lot of times when a kid doesn't do what we want them to do, and I was a nanny for a long time, so I get this at a deep visceral level. I remember nannying these little children and I just loved the shit out of them. But I also remember how frustrating it would be when they didn't do the things I asked them to do.

And as a coach, I now know that was frustrating because of what I was thinking. I was thinking like, "They're disrespecting me." I was thinking like, "They should be listening." I was thinking that it was going to take forever to do the thing we were trying to do because they weren't doing it.

Those thoughts felt very frustrating. I know viscerally, I can still kind of like feel it in my body, what it's like to have that kind of power struggle with someone under the age of five. And then your own brain to be like, "Oh my

Ep #46: Tools For Working Parents

fucking god, I'm the adult here. Why is this not working? It should be working." I know that very well, even though I've never been a parent.

And I also know how powerful it is to be like, "Wait, I'm getting lost in this power struggle. What actually matters here? What actually matters? And what do I want to be the guiding force of the way I'm parenting this person?"

And I wasn't parenting really. But like what did I want to be the guiding force of the way I was nannying, this child? Did I want it to be like me getting caught up in a power struggle with a three year old? Or did I want it to be me loving this child and also instilling in them things that were going to help them be successful and help the household run smoothly?

So let's think about that for you. Now that you know about this guilt factor, and about the socialization, and all the social pressure for you to be perfect at everything, especially parenting. And now that you know that so many parents are measuring their worth by what their kids are doing. And doubly by like, are we doing enough, but our brain will always say we're not. How do you want to redefine that?

And I want to just add, how do you want to redefine that in a doable way? Because a lot of our brains will try to get very perfectionistic about just being perfect in a slightly different way. So it'll be like kind of the same thing, but your brain will pretend it's doing something different.

Push yourself further. How do you want to do this in a way that's absolutely not perfectionistic, that allows for the fact that your kids are not going to listen to you sometimes and you will be probably choosing to issue consequences. And there will be days when you don't spend as much time with them as you'd like to. And there will be days you don't spend as much time on your work as you'd like to.

How do we define success for you as a working parent, taking into account all of that. And all the imperfections of our life. And all the internal

Ep #46: Tools For Working Parents

pressures your brain is going to put on you to be doing it in a way that's literally impossible?

And here's one more thing I want you to think about, which is a lot of our brains, mine included, will always say we should be doing something else. So I've seen this before, where if someone's parenting their brain will be like, "But I should be working." But if they're working their brain is like, "But I should be parenting."

So I think a great hack for this is just to think like, "Okay, if my brain is always going to be telling me I should be doing the other thing. Which thing do I want to choose?" The most freedom comes when we realize that we're not going to ever make a right enough choice that our brain will be like, "Good job," unless we train it to say that.

That is essentially what coaching is, as we retrain your brain to basically say different things to you. But listen, I've been doing that for years and it is super effective in some areas and in other areas my brain says all the same shit it used to and I just have to engage with that shit differently. So let's teach you to engage with that shit differently.

If your brain is always going to say, "Oh, you should have done the other thing." Which thing do you want to choose and go all in on, even when your brain is going to make a little complaint about it?

This is kind of like what I talked about in the 50/50 episode where I said, "If 50% of people are going to love you and 50% of people are going to hate you. Who do you want to be? What do you want to do?"

I would love to say that there's a perfect world where everyone loves us, and our brain never criticizes us. And if you figure out how to do that, please come teach me. But the way I've seen it be most successful is just accepting that our brain sometimes is just playing out its old patterns and they mean nothing.

Ep #46: Tools For Working Parents

And if it's going to say that either way, what do we want to be doing? And what do we want our guiding principles to be? And how do we want to define success in this wildly imperfect world?

As we wrap up, I just want to also mention, I think an interesting thing to think about in the context of this conversation is that the only people who usually get asked about balancing work and family are women. And by women, again, people socialized as women and people who currently identify as women.

I think that's really telling and it shows that in our society we have so much more socialization that we place on women and what we need to do to be successful. And you're allowed to opt out of all of that.

You're allowed, first of all, to decide you don't even want balance. You get to design your life however you want to. And ultimately, you already are. I know when I teach you all about all this socialization, it can seem like someone else is designing your life, but you're the one doing it.

If the socialization has been embedded in your brain, now it's coming from you, even though it came from outside. So I think that's so important to notice. Because when we do, it's so much easier to change when we're like, "Wait, I'm actually the one directing the movie now. I learned all these director moves from our culture, but I'm the one running the shit now. And if I don't like the way it's going, good news, I've got complete control, and I can change it."

I know, it doesn't always feel like you have complete control. It's more like you have access to the complete controls, you might have to learn how to work the complete controls. That's literally what coaching helps people do, is learn how to work the controls and engage with the systems, both of like what you learned culturally, but also what the brain does just because it's a brain. That's what we do.

Ep #46: Tools For Working Parents

But you already are the designer of your life. It's designed subconsciously by what you thought life had to be or what you were taught life should be. And now you just get to design it on purpose.

Okay, let's review. I think one of the things that makes parenting and being a working parent, but even if you're not a working parent, just being a parent who is socialized as a woman or identifies as a woman so hard, is the guilt and the messaging we receive as women that we have to be everything to our kids. And they have to be perfectly happy. And that all of their behavior is reflecting on us. I think that creates so much unnecessary suffering.

And the way we define our success as a parent. So if you want to have a different experience, you got to rewrite that story around the guilt. You got to look at what you are doing and see what you're doing is good enough, even if you want to do it differently.

You got to redefine what success looks like. And understand that if your brains always going to say you're doing the wrong thing. What do you want to choose to do? And how do you want to choose to message it back to yourself? Like your brain might still say you chose the wrong thing.

You can talk back to your brain and be like, "Actually, this is the perfect thing. And I chose it. And here's why it's excellent. And I realize you're always just going to parrot that criticism and it means nothing. And I get to decide that my life is successful. And I get to decide it's balanced." Not in a perfectionistic way, but in a realistic way.

Because when we're looking for that validation from the outside world, we're never going to get it. Not in a way that's meaningful, because as long as we think we're not doing good enough, no one else telling us we are is ever going to sink in.

And a lot of culture won't ever tell us that we are, no matter what we do. We could be award winning in every category and someone would still be like, "Well, you could have done this better."

Ep #46: Tools For Working Parents

So you have to give that validation to yourself and define your own success. And realize that the internal pressure you feel to always be doing better, that is the socialization, and you don't have to listen to it.

All right y'all, that's what I got for you. Have a great day. Talk to you later. Bye.

Thank you for listening to Love Your Job Before You Leave It. We'll have another episode for you next week. And in the meantime, if you're feeling super fired up, head on over to korilinn.com for more guidance and resources.