**Secure Start: The Power of Attachment S5|EP136**

Today I'm joined by Jenny Rose. We have the most incredible conversation about the foundations of attachment and attunement in parenting. We explored how these crucial elements develop in the early years and shape our children's future relationships and mental health.

We also delved into the importance of acknowledging our mistakes to our little ones and how the process of actually saying sorry not only strengthens our bonds with our kids but also sets them up to be resilient. One of the standout takeaways from our conversation for me was the importance of being present in our parenting journey. Jenny shared valuable insights on how conscious parenting can be a game changer but also highlighted some common pitfalls to watch out for.

So if you're looking for a deeper understanding of attachment, attunement and mindful parenting, this episode is really a must listen. Tune in for a thought-provoking conversation that will leave you feeling inspired and empowered to connect with your little one on a deeper level. Welcome to Sense by Meg Fora, the podcast that's brought to you by ParentSense, the app that takes guesswork out of parenting.

If you're a new parent then you are in good company. Your host Meg Fora is a well-known OT, infant specialist and the author of eight parenting books. Each week we're going to spend time with new mums and dads just like you to chat about the week's wins, the challenges and the questions of the moment.

Subscribe to the podcast, download the ParentSense app and catch Meg here every week to make the most of that first year of your little one's life. And now meet your host. Welcome back mums and dads.

As always it is such a pleasure to have you join us here today on Sense by Meg Fora and today we have a special guest who has joined us. Her name is Dr Jenny Rose, she is a clinical psychologist and her deep focus and passion is around parent and child relationships and the attachment that comes out of that and the bearing that that has on the whole of life. So a very warm welcome to you Jenny.

Thank you Meg, thanks so much for having me. It's lovely to have you. Jenny do you want to just give us a little bit of a background on yourself and why it is that you're so passionate about this area of clinical work? Yeah thanks Meg.

I think you know a little bit of my background and introduction as to kind of how I ended up here is that I have been working in the field for close to 20 years. I did my clinical psychology training at TICS and continued with my internship in ComServe up there at a local psychiatric hospital. And as I started out in the field of psychology, I started working with kids I worked in the children's unit, the child and family unit during internship and ComServe and it really set the foundation for the work that I envisioned for myself ahead.

And I think I've spent the last sort of 15-16 years really specializing in this area and my PhD is in attachment-based parenting. I work very closely with parents alike with children and I am working at a local psychiatric hospital as well. So I think what is really amazing about the work that I'm able to do and such a privilege to be able to do is I have a foot in sort of both worlds.

I have this very treatment-orientated, intervention-focused work where I'm working with very severe psychiatric psychopathology, working with children and parents trying to understand a little bit more about that. And then I have this other side which really focuses on the preventative side and how do we empower parents, how do we psycho-educate ourselves, how do we lay a solid foundation so that we can create these solid, resilient, securely attached individuals so that we are ultimately combating the pathology or the struggles that lie down the line. So I think in a way I'm very privileged that I'm able to have sort of elements of both of these worlds that really guide my professional journey and my professional development.

And then certainly I can't ignore that I'm also a mom of three young girls and this is where I draw a lot of my understanding from as well and I think it brings this nuanced way that I can take the academic sort of science research side which I really love. I've worked at tertiary institutions for sort of over 12 years as well and I take my clinical experience but then I also just take the everyday experience of what it is to be a mom. I'm in the trenches with so many of our listeners.

I know what it's like to have sleepless nights and to have meltdowns and struggles and I can really relate in that level as well. Well that's amazing. So I feel like our passions are very aligned in that we both are passionate about the science but also about making that science accessible and make sense for parents.

And today's topic is such a critical one because it is all around mental health for life really. This is the start of the journey and we all know that I think the world is in a mental health crisis and levels of anxiety in adolescence are at an all-time high and in fact all of us are feeling the pressure. And so as a new mom a lot of what we think about is what do I do to future proof my child? How do I prepare them for a world that is going to potentially have even more increased anxiety? What can I do in the early days to make sure that I prepare them for that world? So a lot of that obviously comes from attachment and we had a session it was episode 123 with Professor Mark Tomlinson who I know that you have had interactions with which was fabulous on attachment.

It was very much around the science and I really wanted to follow it up with something that was super practical for parents like how do we really get on top of this as in early parenting? So let's start with the basic attachment-based parenting and of course there's a lot in the in social media around attachment parenting there has been over many years but here we're talking about attachment-based parenting which is parenting with attachment in mind. What is it about and why is it so critical for our little ones? Now Meg I think it's really that fundamental principle that we need to be ensuring we get right in parenting and you know just as you've said we are currently in this major sort of pandemic in the world and there's a mental health crisis and more and more we are seeing the struggles of our youth, young children, teens, there is definitely crisis and parents are recognizing that and realizing we need to sort of understand and explore what we can do to try and combat that but at the same time I think that can be so overwhelming because it feels like this mountain ahead of us and it brings me back completely to what you've just said is what is this thing that we're actually trying to do if we start at the very beginning what is it that we need to work on now that helps us overcome those struggles that mountain that lies ahead down the road and for me that comes back to the relationship always it feels as simple as that that what you know one word relationship what is it between you and your child that you invest in that serves as the barrier to adversity down the line and you know just like a financial investment that we make you know we put away our money and we invest now we only reap the rewards of that years down the line and I feel like the attachment relationship is similar too as parents especially in those early years we form the foundation we need to invest we put in we really have to give a lot of ourselves and we have to show up in many different ways and it is later that we are going to reap the rewards of that investment that our children are going to have resilience security solidity all these things that are going to allow them to overcome struggle and so when we think about the relationship it really the attachment is that very thing what are we doing to create a good connection between a parent and child the primary caregiver and child we know that that is typically mom but can be can be any parenting figure what do we have to put in in that relationship that means that a parent can be connected attuned engaged present those are the things that form the foundation of the attachment relationship and if we get it right I mean if we have this amazing attachment relationship and we're going to talk about how we do it but let's first look at what would we see later on so in in the case of a parent and a baby who have really good attachment what are the positive outcomes long term I mean I know we've spoken globally about it being improved mental health but what does it mean for the child in their relationships later yeah so I think you know again we turn to the very sort of scientific answer where there's numerous research studies that show the sort of plethora of good outcomes of what happens when we are able to invest in that attachment relationship and that really speaks to things like good mental health better academic success better social relationships we can really list a number of things there but for me on a practical level if we just come back to sort of the basics what does it actually look like we are looking at children who turn into teens who turn into adults who are able to get by in life in the most optimal way that they possibly can it means they have capacity to self-regulate that's our ultimate goal with attachment is we want children to develop an ability to hold and regulate their own emotional experiences that does not mean we are making their life void of disappointment or anger or anger frustration or sadness it is saying we are building their capacity to tolerate those things to be able to sit in them we want to develop children that can manage the adversity that lies ahead of them because I think we we fall into the trap of often thinking that we need to remove the struggle that good attachment means there will be no struggle down the line and that is a major major major misassumption or an assumption or misperception because the reality is that every person is going to face struggle in their life at some point and every single one of us is going to have obstacles that lie down our road and the thing is if we build that capacity now it means their ability to overcome the obstacle is that much better a securely attached child is able to overcome adversity is able to navigate challenge without being knocked to the ground and that is where we see children who might not have as strong attachment relationships really feel the brunt of those things they really struggle in those moments and that's where we see the mental health struggles kind of creep in that's we see acting out behavior maybe we see them really pushing boundaries and testing and so the whole sort of holistic idea of what it looks like on a practical level is really that we are building these kids to eventually become people that can make pretty good sound decisions not all the time they're going to make mistakes they're going to be human they're going to mess up they're going to struggle but that they can make good decisions that they've got good solid relationships with other people they have good connection they're emotionally well regulated and just able to hold their own emotional processing absolutely and a lot of what you're speaking to there is resilience it's you know that ability to be have those life's knocks come and knock us because that is going to happen we can't control for that but it's how you respond afterwards and and that's ability to self-regulate and and to and to find different meaning as well so you know to give you that resilience you know it's interesting because it brings me to another thought on that and you know I was I was recently at a restaurant where I saw a young girl I'm living in the UK at the moment and there's a lot of teen pregnancies that we see on the island we live on and there was a young girl teen teen pregnancy with probably maybe an 18 month old or two year old on the beach near us and it was really abusive and traumatic to watch the way that she was handling her child you know really shouting and just just lots and lots of trauma that made us all feel super uncomfortable I mean my husband looked at me at one point and he said you've got to do something you know and of course there's nothing you can do but when I was watching her interact with her little one I knew deep inside me that she probably had been patterned on something that she had seen in her life that she had been handled like that probably and so you see a lot of this intergenerational transmission and you know that in the way that you know her attachment story might have been played out might have now been playing out in her own child's life so aside from that first thing that you spoke about which is resilience in our children we also actually give them the ability to to change the way that they handle their own children you know so we can change the pattern for for lives and I think sometimes some of the moms that we're speaking to may have may have come from backgrounds where they maybe didn't have secure attachment and now they're looking at a situation where you know maybe they feel like they've been going wrong maybe there's been a lot of trauma in their lives maybe they have been and maybe not focused on the attachment relationship and right now this whole conversation is just not sitting well with them because you know have I missed the boat what am I doing have I'm is my child not going to be resilient and so I think for those moms if they feel like they've missed the boat on attachment in the early years and they really feel like maybe they hadn't done all the things that you know that would set their child up for good attachment are there ways that they can strengthen or repair those bonds what steps can they take absolutely makes such a great conversation because I think there's so much depth that lies in this is that it is never too late to work on the attachment relationship and that is what is one of really the most incredible things about this parenting experience is it really is such a forgiving encounter and experience with our kids and there's so much grace and room for error and mistakes and that's that's the reality because it doesn't matter how much we know and how much we might try as parents we will all show up and fail to a certain degree that's the reality and that's why we talk about good enough parenting and not perfect parenting because it's a moment to think that we can all live up to perfect parenting there is not a person that can do that we need to see that actually there's value in showing our kids and modeling to them that it's okay to get angry that it's okay to feel frustrated that it's okay for me to lose control in a moment what we do in that moment afterwards is what is so significant and profound and I think that's really where we are changing the cycle of all the generations before us is that we really are advocating for this ability to show up for our kids and to actually model what it is to repair a relationship show them what it is to apologize show them that you might have remorse for behaving in a certain way and in doing so we are completely normalizing the fact that it is all right to feel these things I think parents often think that they need to show up in this perfect way you know I need to be this perfect parent I always need to be happy I always need to be even keeled even tempered you know there's no room for any other way and parents even when I kind of challenge them on that they often struggle to to realize that it's okay to just show the human side of themselves and where the penny eventually drops for most parents is when I say to them but if you model perfection if you are modeling only always being fine always being regulated no room for struggle what message do you think you are sending to your child because indirectly you're actually saying to them that you expect perfection from them and there's no room for them to ever feel angry or frustrated or disappointed and that's when parents usually go well of course I don't want to do that so it's really in realizing and and the the recognition of how much we impact our children's world through our own way that we show up and that's what speaks to attachment it's the fact that the way I show up every day is going to have an impact on how my child shows up and the lessons that they learn and what they believe about the world that they believe that it's okay if you feel angry what we certainly want to be teaching is that you know we don't want to hit or punch a wall because we are angry so I always make this very sort of straightforward and simple discernment but ultimately we are showing them that you can say yes to the emotion but no to the behavior I love that yeah we can you know there's no emotion that we don't accept we can feel whatever we want to feel even if it isn't warranted in that situation if I feel angry about something I can feel angry I cannot go and hit someone because I feel angry I can't punch a wall because I feel angry I can't swear at my mother because I feel angry you know there's behaviors that we have strong boundaries on but emotionally we have to allow our kids to feel what they are feeling yeah absolutely and there were two very practical tips that I learned along the way that speaks to what you're talking about the one is that it's okay to say I'm sorry and I think the first time that somebody told me that I was like no but I mean that shows my child that I failed you know and learning that very early on actually with my firstborn that actually just say you're sorry and I'll never forget the one day I lost my cool with him completely he was a hell of a toddler I mean he was busy busy and I was tired and I had lost the plot with him and I'd probably done something that wasn't warranted and I remember him looking at me and saying mommy is naughty and realizing actually I've really affronted him and the way that I behaved wasn't in line it wasn't congruent with with what he had done and then realizing oh my gosh I've got this remorse I can't believe I behaved like that and then saying I'm sorry and then it becoming a pattern in my parenting that I've been able to say sorry which I think is it is it's very very important yeah it's such a profound thing and and to jump in quickly there Meg just I think when we fail to show up in in that moment and to be able to apologize um for however we behaved I think we we miss this opportunity which is so incredible for our kids like you've just explained and I think when we can't come back from our behavior we leave our child thinking that they are still responsible and it was something that they've done and that then impacts their so much of their sense of self and the development of of their understanding of themselves so they think that they have made mistakes or there's something wrong with them or they are then it impacts their self-worth they don't feel as confident they then feel anxious about showing up in a similar way on another day and what we gain from giving that apology is we actually say to them it was not something you did that caused my reaction but rather something of mine and so we keep our child's whole sort of sense of self intact and that's the beauty of the reparation it's that we we're saying to our kids it's not something in you that caused that response I take back that that feeling I gave you we made you feel like it was yours to hold I take that back with an apology and when we love it unity for an apology our child sits with that and that is the thing that grows and breeds and festers into not such good things with kids so really that that apology is golden in the goodness that it can do what it creates for our kids I love it I love it and the other thing that came to mind while you were talking is that I loved what you said about the emotions always find the behavior isn't always and you know what I've often said to my parents that I work with don't ever be scared of your children's emotions because you know and I think very often and that's where often discipline goes wrong is that parents are scared of their child being unhappy sad or angry and one of the things that I learned very early on with my kids was to and I use the ABCs a lot in my counseling of parents with with discipline A being acknowledged B being boundary C being choice but the acknowledged part is saying to them I know that you are very cross I know that you are very sad you know and then but and then we continue the conversation and that you know so when my kids will throw in you know back in the day would throw a temper tantrum in the shops because they wanted that chocolate and I would say I know that you cross with mommy that you can't have that chocolate the boundary still is that you can't have the chocolate but it's okay for you to you to feel angry and I think that's also something and it also speaks to the start of self-regulation as well because they then start to identify their emotions which as we know is a foundational part of self-regulation yeah sure so spot on Megan I think you know one of the dangers of parenting today with this wealth of information that's available and you know we on this drive for conscious parenting and you know that's an incredibly good thing I'm a big advocate of conscious parenting but I think that the way it gets implemented isn't always done as it should be and I think people fail to remember that there are these two components exactly as you have described to me in parenting in these moments is the first is we want to validate and acknowledge you're a hundred percent and I think this generation is doing it beautifully I think we are so attuned to being able to pick up I can see that you're frustrated I know that you're angry I know that you're upset with mom I think we do it very well but I think people think that's where conscious parenting ends and they don't move to step two which is to implement the boundary and that actually is simply just permissive parenting and we are doing no favors to our kids when we don't follow through with that next step of putting the boundary in place so we you know we have such good intentions about showing up and we're far more emotionally aware than maybe generations before us but we have to catch ourselves to make sure that we are not missing one of the critical puzzle pieces which is putting the boundaries in place I love that gosh you've articulated that brilliantly because a number of times I've been interviewed on my thoughts on on conscious parenting and specifically when does conscious parenting become permissive parenting and you have outlined that so perfectly because conscious parenting is about identifying the emotions making them relevant and really leaving room for the emotions to be big but then still putting in place a boundary that you might still feel uncomfortable with but that's okay absolutely and I think just to unpack a bit more around what you've kind of emphasized but if we if we don't allow our kids to feel those emotions like you say to your parents you know you welcome all emotions we actually are sending them this sort of unwritten communication that their difficult emotions are too much for us to handle and that's when children internalize and develop really unhealthy emotional processing behaviors that later on can be quite detrimental and can come out in quite you know ways that we really don't want them to come out but we need to be able to say to our children no emotion is too much for me and that is you know often what happens in therapy is I have to be a holding space to say that anything you feel is accepted and welcomed here and when we start to show our kids that they can only be happy or they can only be excited or contained or calm we are teaching them that negative emotions or the emotions that are more difficult are not tolerated and accepted and that's when they become pushed aside very quickly and avoided and that is not good healthy processing and we see it all the time I see kids day after day who can't tolerate the more difficult or more negative emotions and they think they need to resolve it immediately so when there's a disagreement between friendships little kids having you know a squabble on the playground they can't tolerate that difficult feeling of being uncomfortable because they've never been allowed to sit with those feelings and that then allows them to develop anxiety in the friendship or you know they become bussy or you know it can can result in many different behaviors but they can't tolerate some of the nuance of uncomfortable feelings because they've never been allowed that in their own homes. Wow just so many nuggets here incredible one of the things that you mentioned just now is you know kind of the trend towards conscious parenting and if you're on social media you will be and you're a parent you will be inundated with it and likewise there are a lot of other opinions on social media as well that are also very strong and not just on social media also from experts very often experts on social media or in books or just general advice one-on-one advice in the clinic you attend and a lot of this can be massively contradictory and often I really do feel for parents because a lot of early parenting is you're over tired you don't know what's going on nobody's prepared you for this and then every opinion you hear is different and you've got to filter through that noise all the time and sitting in amongst all of that noise somewhere is a deep intuition that we all have and that's what's so difficult to hear so in this world that is so full of advice how do parents tune into their intuition and how do they trust their instincts and should they be trusting their instincts or do they need to be listening to the noise this episode is brought to us by parent sense the all-in-one baby and parenting app that help you make the most of your baby's first year don't you wish someone would just tell you everything you need to know about caring for your baby when to feed them how to wean them and why they won't sleep parent sense app is like having a baby expert on your phone guiding you to parent with confidence get a flexible routine daily tips and advice personalized for you and your little one download parent sense app null from your app store and take the guesswork out of parenting and should they be trusting their instincts or do they need to be listening to the noise sure i think that's one of the biggest sort of potholes at the moment is that parents are becoming less and less aware of their own intuition as a parent and you know the very thing we're trying to avoid in our children we don't want our children to only externalize look for external motivation we want them to develop intrinsic motivation we want them to hear their own inner voice we want them to rely on themselves and yet we get to parenting and we're becoming less and less like that we are turning only to the outside world we are looking for external input all the time we're looking for scripts and generic things to be able to apply in parenting moments and we're losing that ability to just trust our gut and you know i'm sure it sounds ironic because i'm someone that also is giving advice and input and on social media for you to kind of get some some wisdom from and i can recognize the irony in that but my hope is that always at the forefront of my message is i'm there to try and help you find your intuition I really believe that we instinctively know our kids so well and know what to do with them. When a parent comes to see me, I say to them time and again, I'm not the expert here. You are the expert of your child.

You are the only one that knows your own child like you do. And I can offer input and give some advice here and give you little bits of things to tweak and try. But ultimately, you are the expert of your child.

And if we can have a little bit of guidance around that on some of the fundamentals, like the attachment relationship, like the basics that we are applying in everyday living, then you are able to access your own inner voice more and more because that intuition exists there. We know what to do with our kids. We know in a moment.

I know in a moment not because a textbook or clinical experience or anything else has taught me. I know because how I feel in a moment of interaction with my child, if that felt good and is something that is going to develop them and prosper them, or if that interaction with them felt not good and like it could hinder them. That is that we know in those moments.

We know in the moments that we've shown up and we've lost our cool and we've yelled, you know, off the balcony or whatever it looks like. We know in those moments what we've done wrong. And I think we have far more insight into our own parenting abilities than what we give ourselves credit for.

Absolutely. And you know, it makes me think about when I was studying occupational therapy back in the day, they used to talk about the art and science of therapy. And the science was what we had studied.

It was the theories, it was the principles, the techniques, you know, everything that we read in a textbook. But what really made the therapeutic relationship magical was actually the art of it. And, you know, that feeling that you get.

And I think a lot of that is the same with parents. You know, I am also a so-called parenting expert that has put out eight books. And so, therefore, I've given some type of blueprint for parenting, you know, admittedly.

But I always hope that the parents will take that, use that as their framework, and they will color in between those lines and make it magical because, you know, that's what intuition will do. Absolutely. And I think that's, you know, when people are saying, you have to do this by the book to this degree or, you know, there's no room for shifting and use this absolute script.

That's when we need to recognize that that doesn't seem right, because it's not fitting with using your intuition and using this as a framework. So, I love that idea. Exactly.

We're providing frameworks to people. We're trying to allow them greater understanding. And I think, as with anything in life, the more we know, the more we empower ourselves.

But it's up to us to sort of how we implement it in our own home and what that looks like. Absolutely. So, I'm sure some parents are listening of very little babies.

So, they're at the beginning of the trajectory, which is awesome because now they're hearing why this is so important. But let's turn our attention to a couple of practical tips. If I'm a mom sitting here now and thinking, right, I want this attachment journey to be really, really fabulous for my child.

What are a couple of the really practical tips that you would give them to have a really secure attachment and to kind of put this attachment theory into practice? So, I think it's interesting when you ask that question, Meg, I'm kind of torn between like, what do we do with the child and what do we do with the mom? I feel like I want to explore both aspects. And strangely, I actually think so much of it is really reflective for the parents and what they need to think about. And the first thing I think needs to be there is that we need to ease the pressure off of ourselves and stop striving to be this perfect parent.

And I think fundamentally, parents can recognize that they need to be good enough that already the impact on the attachment relationship is going to be huge. Because it's when we feel that we need to be showing up with this perfection that actually we are riddling the relationship with anxiety. We actually are not present because we are so focused on either the next thing or multitasking about trying to do so many things at once that we are losing the essence of what it is to be with.

You know, that concept, the psychological concept of be with, you know, it feels like it's an unfinished sentence. Be with what or be with something. It's not.

It's be with. And that's what it's speaking to is we are just actually together. This relationship.

I'm present. I'm attuned. I am showing you with my body that I want to be with you.

And I think, again, this is where as parents, we are so focused on making sure we give the most wholesome, nutritious meal, which is also important. I don't dismiss that. But, you know, we're so focused on growing the butternut in our garden that we're about to puree that we spend half the time in the kitchen and not with our baby.

And I think it's just getting that balance right that while we, of course, are striving to be the absolute best parents we possibly can, come back to basics, come back to being with. Spend time with your child. Again, we are talking about quality over quantity.

It is not about having to sit for five hours on end with them. But it's about saying the time that I'm with my child is going to be devoted, intentional time where I am present. I am attuned to them.

You know, this is one of the biggest parts of the attachment relationship is what we call attunement. And that is responding to a child's cues. And you may know that all too well and have written ample sort of things about looking at baby's cues and what they are telling us.

But we're taking it even further to the emotional cues. What are they communicating to us? And do we model and mirror and mimic those things for them? Can we show them that we can contain them through the relationship? Are we able to hold whatever it is they are going through? So it's really these basics of the relationship. It's us.

We are the tool. It's no fancy gimmick or toy or puzzle or something that's going to advance their development. It is you and your child and the beauty that can exist between the two of you.

Yeah, I mean, that is just so profound. And I think, you know, when you talk about being in the moment, there's a million things that can be the distractor from the perfect parenting piece, which you were speaking about, grow the button up, do the perfect meals, creating a perfect parenting veneer. It can also be the distraction of social media.

I mean, every single one of us, yeah, every single one of us has sat in a restaurant. And moms, if you do it this weekend, go and have a look around. At some point in a restaurant, you will see a couple where one picks up their phone.

The other one kind of loses interest, picks up their phone, and immediately the situation is broken. And I think we often do that in our parenting relationships. I'll never forget a few years ago, I was in a kawaii little kind of takeaway wrap shop in Cape Town.

And there was a nanny. She was definitely a nanny and not the mom with her charge, a little boy who was about 18 months old. And he was sitting in a pram facing towards her and she was on her phone.

And I was probably in that coffee shop for about an hour and a half. And she never once looked up at him. And he did so much to try and get her attention.

And eventually he was kind of pushing things over and he was trying desperately to get her attention. And there was just nothing. She'd kind of hand a straw back to him, hand a toy back to him, pick it up off the floor.

But there was absolutely no engagement. And I felt so uncomfortable. I mean, it got to a point where I was like, do I say something or do I post this on social media to say, whose nanny is this that's doing this with this child? It was so, so disturbing because it was a very long period of time for a little one to not be in relationship.

And I think that happens quite easily for us as parents. Yeah, there's a little thing that you can have a look at on YouTube called the still face experiment that I'm sure you know, but it's something I've used for years in my training of master's psychology students. And it's a very short little video and it's really lovely to watch because it basically shows this mom and a little baby, you know, exactly that age and showing at very present, you know, her facial expressions, mimicking the babies and how the baby kind of responds.

And then they ask her to almost have the still face where she is completely non-responsive in her face, yet still in the same proximity and how distressed this baby becomes because she's not picking up on his cues. And this is a very old video. You can see by how it's done.

It's, you know, 15 years old, but this video is actually coming back into sort of play a great deal more because they are actually saying that this still face experiment is what is happening because we are on phones. And so we might not be sitting there, you know, blank spaces staring into, you know, the abyss in front of our child, but we are currently doing that now with the phone in front of our face and our child get the same experience of us that we are not attuned. We are not responding to them and it is distressing for the child.

And eventually when we do this over and over again, they almost come to learn that we're not available and that's really what we don't want. And it's something I think that we all need to be so conscious of. I know, you know, I'm certainly not on a high horse sitting here and I know I make these very same mistakes in my own parenting, but just really how we need to focus on being far more intentional in our presence.

You know, I often talk about this idea that we've idealized multitasking and I'm a multitasker of notes. I'm able to cook dinner and have a hand in homework and maybe even respond to an email all in one go. But it's not a good thing.

We shouldn't be striving for this and we shouldn't be idealizing it because my child sitting there while I'm maybe doing a little bit of homework with her is not feeling like I'm present. She doesn't feel like I've been there. I've sat with her and that I'm in this process with her.

And maybe at the end of the day, I kind of can go through my checklist of things that I've done. But on a relational level, I was not present and I didn't meet the need that was there. And I think that's what's happening with phones.

They're really pulling us out of being connected. Yeah, absolutely. And I actually cite that piece of research very often.

Mums, if you're wanting to look for it, the researcher is Ed Tronick and it is the still face experiment. You can go and Google it. You'll come up with the video and it is very, very painful to watch.

I'm going to give you a trigger warning. It is a very painful video to watch because you can see how distressed the baby becomes. And when you start to correlate it across to screen time and kind of parents not being in the moment, it really does sit very uncomfortably with all of us.

And Jenny, I'm exactly on the same page. I'm 100% guilty of this. What's fortunate is that when children get a little older, if they've had the experience of good parenting, they'll call you out on it.

And so, you know, if I ever have got my head in my phone, my adolescents will say to me, are you actually listening to me? Of course, an 18 month old can't say so. Which I love. It also just speaks to, you know, that relationship, the attachment relationship where there is room to challenge.

I think, you know, again, that's one of the cycles that we're breaking with this generation is that we are able to call our parents out on things. You know, while we, of course, need to be respectful and those are fundamentals in a home, we also need to be able to verbalize and actually find our voices. You know, there's always that kind of analogy of saying, like, I want to raise this child that can stand up to the CEO if there's an injustice at their work one day or is in a relationship with a partner that's treating them badly that they can stand up and challenge them.

But definitely don't challenge me as a parent until then. You know, let the challenging start at 18 only. But that's not how it works.

And we have to be able to raise our kids to be able to find their voice and stand up for things that are important. Absolutely. Oh, Jenny, a million nuggets.

I'm so excited to work with you more. Jenny and I have got some plans that we're hatching in terms of maybe a parenting course, maybe one for professionals and maybe even a book in there. So you're going to have to watch this space.

But Jenny, in the meantime, how can people get hold of you? You mentioned social media. Maybe give us your handle. And if somebody is in crisis, do you take clinical patients as well? Yeah, absolutely.

So I think there's many ways for me to offer support. So I think you can have a look on my social media pages. It's just Dr. Jenny Rose.

My website is also www.drjennyrose.com. And I've got a couple of online courses that offer support for parents, some of the basics, the fundamentals that we've spoken about here and courses on sibling relationships and how to enhance them. There's numerous resources available and certainly able to do some parenting work and offer some assistance there. So if anyone is struggling or feels like they need to be in touch, then please absolutely reach out.

Brilliant. Thank you so much, Jenny. I have loved our conversation.

We're very much on the same page. And moms, I hope that you have taken away some real nuggets today. So thank you all for joining us.

And thanks, Jenny. Thanks, Meg. Cheers.

Thanks to everyone who joined us. We will see you the same time next week. Until then, download ParentSense app and take the guesswork out of parenting.