

## CO-PARENTING WITH AN EMOTIONALLY ABUSIVE MAN

*Hi. This is Natalie Hoffman of [FlyingFreeNow.com](http://FlyingFreeNow.com), and you're listening to the Flying Free Podcast, a support resource for women of faith looking for hope and healing from hidden emotional and spiritual abuse.*

NATALIE: Welcome to Episode 23 of the Flying Free podcast. Today, Rachel and I are going to answer a question. It's going to take the whole episode to answer this question because it's a big one. In fact, we could probably do two podcasts on this one, but we'll see if we can get it all done in one. We're going to play the question, and then Rachel and I are going to dig in. Here we go.

CALLER: Hi. I just wanted to see if you could do a podcast on parenting and/or co-parenting after separation from an abusive person. Any advice on how to help the children through this process especially when they may have an allotted amount of time to go with dad? His house is run very differently than mine. I don't know if you have children or not, but how did you go through that? How do you encourage your kids through this process especially when there are times when there are overnights, they aren't with you, and you're not sure what's going on, yet you see how hard it is on them? Any advice or resources would be great. Thank you.

NATALIE: Rachel, do you have any initial thoughts?

RACHEL: I think the biggest thing here is the overall attitude as we tackle this challenge of trying to be there in the way that our kids need us by simply having empathy with them and being in this journey with them. They are suffering, you are suffering. It's not something that can ever be glossed over because it's always going to be there. The best way forward is just to go through it with them, be alongside them, and know that they are hurting, you're hurting, you have to grieve, and they have to grieve. It hurts, it sucks, and it's not ever what you wanted for them. You wanted a father for them who was going to be there, who was going to be the ideal godly dad, show them Jesus, et cetera. But that's not the truth. That's not the reality that happened. So what are you going to do about that? I think the key there is being empathetic, being there with your kids, and trying to understand their hearts because they are in so much pain and they need us to be a stable source of that love and support on top of all the other things we have to do (as if there wasn't enough).

NATALIE: Right, it feels overwhelming.

RACHEL: It absolutely is.

NATALIE: You really do feel like you're drowning. You're focused on getting out of the marriage or getting yourself to a place of safety. There's a lot of energy there sometimes because you have reached the end of your rope. You have all this energy. You make that final push to jump off that cliff, and you do it. I hope there are some people who are listening who haven't actually made that plunge yet who are thinking, because this is one of the biggest thoughts that runs through our heads, "What about my kids? What's going to be in their best interest? Is it in their best interest for me to be separated from their dad for a while, and hopefully we can get back together?" Generally speaking, these guys don't really change, though. Often a separation will end up being the catalyst for an actual divorce. Not always, but often. Then what? Is it better that they are raised in a family where there is a lot of fighting, a lot of lying, and a lot of abuse going on? Or is it better to be raised in what we call a "broken family," where the kids are being carted back and forth? There are just a lot of questions, statistically, about what is better for kids. From my reading, from my personal experience, and from watching others go through this, I have learned that statistically, kids do better if they have at least one parent or one adult in their life who is emotionally intelligent, who is empathetic, and who accepts and loves them wherever they are at in their journey. That child has a very good percentage chance of thriving in their adult life.

RACHEL: Yes.

NATALIE: So the pressure really is on you as a woman, because if you are separating or divorcing your ex, this is their father. The reason you are doing that is because your ex is not emotionally intelligent. He is not able to empathize. He is not providing what you need and is probably not providing what the kids need either. Maybe he is playing with them, interacting with them, and being a fun dad. Is your ex-husband kind of like that?

RACHEL: Yes. I think there is a whole lot of room, as my son is fourteen, for him to do whatever he wants. I think there is also a very hard line where my son knows he cannot cross that line with his dad. That line probably has to do with anything touchy-feely.

NATALIE: Right! That hits the nail on the head! These guys, if they weren't able to connect with their wife, they are probably not able to connect on a really deep level with their kids. They can have good conversations around sports, the weather, or what they did in school. But when it comes to discussing deep feelings of hurt, anger, or frustration, they can't connect on that level because there is something broken inside the adult parent, they aren't able to connect, and they are passing on that brokenness to their children. As a woman, not only are you now going through all this hell of

separating, you are dealing with all the fallout of that. Your husband is launching a smear campaign. Your church is questioning you. Your family is maybe questioning you. Everyone is guilt tripping you. Your faith is falling apart because you are wondering if God doesn't love you anymore. But also, now you've got all these kids who are needy. It doesn't matter what age they are.

When I separated from my ex, my oldest at the time was twenty and my youngest was one. I had every age in between with nine kids. They all had their own issues. Honestly, my youngest kids did the best with it. I got these books from the library. There are lots of books at an elementary grade level that you can check out from the library about separation and divorce of parents. We read those books and normalized the experience for them, which is what you want to do. That sounds terrible, that we "normalized" something as horrible as this. But that is what you need to do because the kids are just thrown sideways. It's surreal. You want them to understand. You have the perspective of having life experience under your belt. Maybe you've seen this or had friends in high school whose friends had divorced. You've watched other people get divorced. You know that divorce happens to over fifty percent of people who are married, so you know it's not like this unusual, strange, bizarre thing. It's painful and it's horrible, but it's not out of the ordinary. These kids don't know anything about that. If they were raised in a religious environment, divorce is anathema. This really is surreal, so you want to normalize it for them and explain to them, "This is painful and hard, but it's not so unusual. It happens to a lot of people, and as you get older you will know a lot of people who have grown up like this."

RACHEL: And it's not the end. It's not the end of all hope. There is life after this. It hurts so much right now, but we're going to get through this together. We're going to find a new life and a new normal. It may not be what we thought it was going to look like, but it can still be good because God is going to be there. We're going to be there. You're going to figure it out. I do think it is really important to grieve with them. I remember one of the most painful things about my divorce process was first of all figuring out, as you were referencing, Natalie, what was going to be best for my kid. For me, I had to stand up and say, "The way that this family has operated is not okay." It's not okay to dehumanize another person and call that a relationship. I didn't want that example anymore. I wanted my son to have the example of standing up and saying, "No. No more." One of the most painful things was that he told me this was his biggest fear. He had always known that things weren't always great with his dad and I, and he had always been afraid that it was going to happen. That was a knife in the heart for me. I did a lot of very serious grieving about that. But two years later, he is doing well. He and I have a good relationship. There are normal teen things that we go through, but he talks to me because he knows that I can be talked to about things. So I'm really

thankful.

NATALIE: So, he's got that anchor.

RACHEL: He does, yes.

NATALIE: We want to talk about your own health because really, your own health, emotional and spiritual health, is going to be extremely important to your ability to be able to help your kids. I know that sounds counterintuitive. "Now I have to reach out and help my kids. I have to spend myself and die and all of this." Actually, if you do that, you won't be any help to your kids. Your kids will be floundering. I know it's not fair that you are the one person in their life and that you are the only one that can do this. You're going to have to do everything. You're going to have to do all the doctor's visits, all the dentist visits, and all the counseling visits. You are on duty 100%.

Here's the other thing that is going to happen. Your ex, your soon-to-be-ex, or the dad is going to make this out to his kids as, "This is a catastrophe! This is the end of the world, and your mom is doing this. Your mom is destroying your lives and my life! She's destroying it and our lives will never be the same." And the sky is falling. He is going to do that. Your kids are going to be scared. My ex told my oldest daughter, "Well, I'm just going to have to move to Colorado" (we live in Minnesota) "now because I won't be able to afford to live here." He has a very excellent paying job with the city of Minneapolis. But he can't afford to live here? It's unreal. He makes three times as much money as I make, but he is going to have to move to Colorado. She was terrified! She was terrified that she wasn't going to see her dad. I had to calm her down and say "Hey, your dad is just saying that because he is mad, and he's trying to hurt everybody around him because he's hurting. He wants everyone to be scared. He wants everyone to be mad at me because I'm the one who said 'No.' But don't worry, your dad is not going to move to Colorado. He's just not. That would be the worst thing for him. He won't do it. Plus, if he wants to parent, he can't move out of state. So don't worry about it. I know he loves his kids, and he wants to parent you guys. He's going to stay." That calmed her down, but she was crying. He told her once that it was all her fault, that she was the cause of our divorce.

RACHEL: Oh my gosh!

NATALIE: She came in the house and was sobbing. Her whole body was shaking. She was absolutely terrified that she was the cause of our divorce. Yes, they will do this to the kids because again, their whole world revolves around them. They don't care about you. They don't care about their kids. They don't care about anybody else's emotional

health, including their own. It's kind of like a child. They just care about what they are feeling at the moment, and they lash out at everybody and scare their kids. So you are going to have to pick up the pieces. This is very triggering for you too, because now you are seeing him do to them what he did to you and it makes you angry. It's going to make you really angry and scared because you don't want your kids to go through this.

One important thing is, if your insurance will cover it or if you can afford it, it's important that your kids are able to access some counseling services. Please, not Bible counseling services. I'm talking about real therapists who are licensed and trained to help children recover from divorce and any other trauma they might have experienced. Emotional abuse is extremely traumatic. It is long-term trauma. It's over a long period of time, and your kids have either watched it happen to you (which is traumatic as well) or they have also experienced it themselves. Every time your husband or their dad tells them that something didn't happen or that it's different than the way they perceived it to be, that's gaslighting. That's traumatic mind-mapping. It's creating a lot of cognitive dissonance and confusion in their minds. That in and of itself is extremely traumatizing to a child.

RACHEL: Yes. I was thinking about how my ex-husband told our son that I had gone crazy. The whole scenario was that he was the calm, stable one, and that I was just off going crazy, like insane. That made for a set up where my son said he wanted to live with his dad because he needed to take care of dad, which is weird because if he's the calm, stable one... but that was the way that worked out. I was so hurt by that, of course. But it wasn't my words that changed my son's mind or told him it wasn't the truth. It was my actions over a period of time where he could see "Actually, mom is the same person she has always been. She's actually not crazy." A lot of times I think there is this desire to try to explain ourselves to our kids, whereas the best course of action is just being there, being stable, being loving, and showing them over the long term that it's going to be okay. "I'm still the same person. I will always love you. I will always be here with you."

NATALIE: Yeah. They need to have that consistency because they are not getting it from their dad. Another example that happened to one of my kids is that she was five when we separated and seven by the time I filed for divorce. She was nine by the time the divorce was final. She was a grade-schooler during the course of this whole process. As she was five when we separated, she really was oblivious to what was going on, but by the time she was seven and I filed for divorce, she kind of pretty much knew what was going on. She was having chronic stomach pain all the time. She was not herself at all. She was normally a very happy, cheerful, sweet little girl, and she was really down and sad all the time.

That's when I got them into counseling. One of the things she told the counselor was, "I feel like I have to make my daddy happy, and I don't know how to do that. I'm not able to do that." She articulated that in her little girl way. But the counselor told her (and told me afterwards), "You are not responsible for your daddy's happiness. You're responsible for your happiness. Your daddy is a grown-up. If he's sad, he can take a walk, call a friend, or read a good book." She gave her some ideas of what an adult could do to manage their emotions, and then she said, "It is not a child's responsibility to manage a parent's emotions." Well, this particular daughter is super emotionally intelligent, and she really gets things. That immediately clicked with her, and she completely went back to her normal, happy self again, and the stomach aches went away. So, that worked for her.

RACHEL: That is beautiful.

NATALIE: It is beautiful, and it's a great example. Now, not every child is going to respond that way. She has always been able to see the truth for what it is. Even with her siblings, when they try to gaslight her or are not nice, she will roll her eyes and say, "No! That's just a definite no. I'm not buying that." She's very calm. She doesn't get hysterical. She's just a really smart, with-it kid. But all of my kids are not like that. Some of my kids are much more emotional. Emotional as far as easily triggered. I think they've been more traumatized by things. My older kids definitely struggled far more with the separation and divorce process than my younger kids did. But they have all come around. All but my oldest. My oldest is still not talking to me.

RACHEL: We're praying for him.

NATALIE: Yeah. I know. A lot of people are praying for him and for that relationship. He just recently told one of my other kids that he believes that I am a fraud, that I am the liar, and that I am playing the other kids. So, he actually has the entire narrative completely twisted upside down. The kids don't believe it. They don't buy it. They don't understand where he's coming from, but he's the one person that isolated from me when his dad and I separated. He isolated, and he hasn't really communicated with me much. For the last two years, he hasn't talked to me at all. There's nothing I can do. I have to respect that. He's an adult. He's twenty-five. He's married. He has his own business. I feel like my only job there is to respect the space that he wants and to hope that someday he will want a relationship with me again. But there's nothing that I can do about that. Everyone else has come around.

Here's the ironic thing. I don't believe it's healthy to turn kids against one of their parents. That's not healthy. So it wouldn't be healthy for us to say, "Your dad, he is this

and this and this." I did some of that when I was first getting out because I was like a cat in a corner. I had PTSD big time. Symptoms were just blowing up all over the place, and I needed to get therapy for that. I was panicking. My church was not believing me. People weren't believing me. I thought, "I can't lose my kids!" My kids were my life. My whole life revolved around my children, so I was in a panic trying to explain what was going on to my older kids.

Looking back, I wish I hadn't done that. I wish I had done that in a different way. I don't think it's healthy to pretend to your older kids that nothing is going on, because that's not telling the truth. I think we need to tell the truth, but tell it in such a way that, rather than try to convince them of what you have experienced from your husband, to be able to say "You know, I'm glad that you have..." even if they don't have a decent, deep relationship with their dad, they are going to want to believe that they do because that's what kids want to believe, right? You could say, "I'm glad that you feel really good about your relationship with your dad. That's really important, and it's good that you feel that way. That makes me happy. But I don't have a good relationship with him, and my marriage is not about you and your dad. You and your dad don't have to get divorced. You can have a great relationship with your dad, but I was married to him, and a marriage is a very different thing from having a parent. That marriage relationship was not healthy, and I need to get out of it because after twenty-some years, I can't do it anymore. You don't have to understand why. That's not really your place to understand why."

This is what I wish I would have done, but instead, I went into some details with my older kids that I shouldn't have gone into. I shouldn't have laid that on them. That is something that I have regretted, that I have apologized for, and asked their forgiveness for. But I can't change that. We have to move on. We make mistakes. Especially when we are going through trauma, we make a lot of mistakes. I still make mistakes because I'm human. We can all circle back and say we are sorry, but beyond that there's nothing more we can do. It's over and done with. But I do think it's important to speak the truth.

Here's where I'm getting at. The kids will come home from their dad's and they will have experienced something that really is very painful for them. They're going to tell me about it because they know I'm going to listen, and they should have a safe person to tell about it. They should. They've got to be able to tell someone who's going to validate their experience and say... well, here's what you don't do. You don't say, "Oh my word! I can't believe it! Yeah, he's a crazy dad. He's a horrible dad." We don't do that. He might be doing that about you, but you don't do that about him. But you also don't say, "Oh no, I'm sure he would never do that. He's not that. He's an amazing dad. He loves you." No, we don't lie either. We don't put thoughts into their heads, but what we do say is

“Well, how did that make you feel? Write that down.” You can always say “Wow. I’m so sorry that happened to you. How did that make you feel?” Let them express their emotions. “I felt really mad. I felt really frustrated because he didn’t believe me. I feel like he does this all the time and I don’t know what to do and I don’t know how to handle it. I feel so angry.”

Then you validate and say, “I understand why you’d have those kinds of emotions. I’ve experienced those kinds of emotions too. I’m really sorry that you had to go through that.” Sometimes that’s all it takes. They feel better. They got it off their chest and feel better. They run off and play. Someone listened. Someone heard. Someone validated, and they’re done. They can let it go now. But sometimes they stew about it. They might come back to you and want to vent a little bit later. You just listen. But that is something that you have to be able to do, and you have to be able to let the truth lay there on the table. You have to let it hurt because I’m sorry, but the truth pretty much sucks in these situations. It sucks for you and it sucks for them. It’s going to trigger you. It’s going to make you angry at him.

There have been times when I’ve been able to say, “You know this is not right.” For example, they didn’t have the ability to contact me at one point. So then I had to talk to him about that. “Hey, you know what, this is in the divorce decree. They should have the ability to contact me when they are over there. You can’t withhold them from doing that. That’s not appropriate. I’m their parent, and if they want to contact me while they are over there then they should be able to, and vice versa. It goes both ways. So if you want that respect, you need to give that same respect to me as well.” I recommend using an app called “Our Family Wizard” or “Talking Parents” so that you have everything on record.

Some guys will bombard their wives with emails and texts: “You blankety blank; You’re this and you’re that.” Once in a while I’ll get that from him if I’ve done something he doesn’t like. But for the most part, mine is the opposite. He just doesn’t say anything. He doesn’t respond. It’s hard to co-parent with people like this because they aren’t working with you. They either undermine you overtly with attacks or they are undermining you covertly by not communicating with you, by not reading your texts, by not responding to things you need to discuss about the children that you are co-parenting. Some people have renamed it parallel parenting. You aren’t co-parenting because you can’t work together with this person, which is really sad. It’s sad for the kids. This is not in the best interest of the kids to have one parent who’s not willing to co-parent with you, but nevertheless, that’s the reality of it.

You can parallel parent. Picture two people walking side-by-side. You hand over the



kids to them, and then they are parenting on their own because they aren't involving you. Then they pass the kids back to you, and then you are parenting without the co-parenting skills of the other parent. It's sad, but you can do it. Here's my most comforting thing about this, and I think it's really healthy. Instead of being in a toxic environment 24/7, they are only in that kind of environment for a shorter period of time. Then they can come to your environment, and hopefully you are creating safe spaces where there can be deep conversations, where we can talk about our emotions, and where we're not shamed for crying, shamed for being angry, or shamed for being human or experiencing human things. We are encouraged. We're validated. We're loved. We're accepted just the way we are. We can have a melt-down and we're not shamed and told, "You're a bad boy! You can't be like that! You'd better do what I say or I'm going to give you the silent treatment." They have a place where they are not experiencing that, and that sets them up to see the difference.

Over the course of time, especially as they get older, they will be able to see and experience the difference. I'm blabbing on here, but I learned that there is something called child-focused mediation. One of the things they do to find out how kids are doing in both homes is that the psychologist will say, "How are you feeling in this home?" and they will hold up pictures of a sad person, a scared person, or a happy person. Then the children describe their feelings. So instead of having to describe what they are experiencing... because with covert passive aggressive abuse the incidents are so hard to describe. They are so tiny. One of my daughters, who is living with him full-time right now (and I won't go into why), said to me, "I don't feel like I can call the mental health people because I think, if I just explain this one incidence, they will be like 'Well, what's the big deal about that?'" But she feels... she's depressed. She feels sick inside because she is dealing with this on a regular basis. What these psychologists will do is find out not what is happening there (that's too hard to describe), but "How do you feel over there? How are you feeling? Do you feel, overall, safe? Do you feel happy? Do you feel loved? Do you feel secure? If you're not feeling safe, happy, loved, and secure, then there's something wrong in that environment." You don't have to be able to articulate what it is. There just is definitely something wrong. Anyway, I think I've rambled on. Do you have anything to add?

RACHEL: There's a lot of good stuff. Going back to how you were talking about how your oldest son has this completely twisted idea of who you are and what you've done here, I want to share with our listeners some advice you gave me back when I was struggling with this whole thing of what to do about my son and the overwhelming amount of pain that comes when you are trying to process what's going to be best for them. I had, at that point, surrendered my marriage, surrendered the outcome of my marriage, to the LORD. You told me, "You need to surrender that boy to Jesus." I realized that was

the one thing I hadn't done. After I did that, it was such a freeing experience. That's what Jesus does. He sets us free. That's what we're called to do. We are stewards. We're the parents. We've been given a responsibility to them, but they are not ours. They belong to the LORD, and we can only do this in conjunction with the LORD. It's not in our own power. Starting with surrender, giving their lives over, asking for God's will here, and just letting go is the best way to help them and one of the most loving things we can do on their behalf. It's counterintuitive, but it is so important.

NATALIE: Right. I want to add before we close, you are going to feel like, "Now I have to do everything." You kind of do, but there are some things that you are not responsible for. I think it's important to understand what you are responsible for with these kids and what you aren't responsible for. This goes along with what Rachel just said, because we can only do what we can do. Jesus has to fill in those gaps that we aren't able to fix in their lives. We didn't really talk about self-care, but we've talked about that in the past. Sarah McDugal did a podcast on self-care, so go back to that. That would be the foundation for taking care of yourself. Out of that place of strength and safety for yourself, then you will be able to help your kids more.

Here are some things that you are responsible for. You are responsible to love them, obviously. You are responsible to set up boundaries for them. You are responsible to give them a healthy parent who has healthy boundaries. When you are working on that for yourself, that's a gift that you are giving not just to yourself, but you are giving a gift to your children by modeling having healthy boundaries, modeling being able to say "No, you can't treat me like that," or "No, I can't do that right now." Otherwise your kids will grow up thinking, "In order for me to be loved and accepted or in order for me to be a valuable human being in this world, I have to say yes to everyone and make everyone happy." No. That's a complete and total lie! You're responsible for being their guardian and offering protection and safety for them. You are responsible for managing their health, managing their appointments, managing anything else they need to do as far as school and that kind of thing. You are responsible for being a source of good things for them. You are responsible for setting up rules and consequences. You are responsible for providing them with security. You are responsible for maintaining your own personal life.

But here is what you are not responsible for. You are not responsible for their feelings and emotions, okay? Feelings and emotions come to us or happen to us. Yes, you would be responsible if you are screaming obscenities at them, obviously. That's going to cause a lot of emotions in them. Yes, you would be responsible for that. I'm talking about emotions like when you say, "Okay you guys, it's time for us to do our Saturday morning chores." They are upset, they are angry, they are mad, they are frustrated. You

are not responsible for that. You might feel guilty and think, "Oh my word. I'm just making my kids unhappy." Um, no! You are not responsible for that. You are not responsible for keeping your kids straight and abstinent. You can teach them good morals and teach them good protocols in that area, but you can't force them to not do things you don't want them to do. Don't feel guilty if they go do stuff that they're not supposed to do.

Now, you are responsible for setting up boundaries and implementing consequences. If the curfew is 10:00 and they are staying out until 2:00 with their boyfriend or girlfriend doing things that you don't approve of, you are responsible, not for the things they are doing, but for that curfew. They weren't home at 10:00, so now they can't go out for the next two weeks or whatever. We don't want to get into details. You are not responsible for their school performance or their grades. Sometime, the kids' private school will send me emails like, "Make sure your kids do this or that." I think, "Sorry. If my kids don't get good grades because they didn't do their homework, then they shouldn't get good grades." My kids all get pretty good grades because they know they are on duty when it comes to homework. I'm not going to do their homework for them. I'll help them, but I'm not going to do it for them. With my little kids, I will help them learn good study habits. But my older kids, no, they are on their own. You are not responsible for their future vocation. You are not responsible for any consequences that they experience outside of the home. So if they get picked up by the police because they are doing drugs, you aren't responsible for that. One of my daughters, who has lots of emotional problems, has physically assaulted me many times, and I finally called the police on her. She got arrested. She was taken away. It's on her record now. We're working to get it off her record, but if you physically assault someone, you get arrested for that.

RACHEL: That's what happens.

NATALIE: That's what happens. I called the police because I finally decided, "This isn't right. I'm not going to do this anymore. If you're going to hurt me, you're going to get arrested for it." You are not responsible for their social life or for their choice of friends. This kind of relieves some of the burden, but I think we cross their boundaries when we try to control. As they get older, we need to release some of that control. We control what they do inside of our home, but beyond that, we don't really have a lot of control. We get angry and scream and yell because, "You shouldn't have..." but if we don't really implement any consequences for it, that's not appropriate, either. You are going to be tempted to feel so guilty that you brought this separation or divorce into their lives that you want to make up for it by giving them everything they want and making them happy in other ways. Kids will manipulate that. They'll use that to their advantage. I'm

going to end with some book recommendations. Why don't you tell them yours, because you were telling me about a book you were loving?

RACHEL: "Boundaries with Teens" is fantastic. I actually had to break it out the other day and reread it because there were a few things on the report card that I wanted to address. But I needed a reminder about how to deal with that. Thanks for saying that about the grades not being our responsibility, because it is easy to feel shame if they aren't meeting their potential, like, putting that upon yourself, but it's their choices and they need to learn how to deal with these things. So "Boundaries with Teens" by Dr. John Townsend. A fantastic book.

NATALIE: They have another one called "Boundaries with Kids," and I have that one. That's also a very good book, so if you have younger kids below the tween age, that would be a good book to get. Another book is "Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child" by John Gottman. That's an excellent book. Another excellent book is "Beyond Consequences, Logic, and Control" by Heather Forbes. Actually, there are two volumes, so you can get both if you want to or start with the first one and move to the next one. Anyway, "Beyond Consequences, Logic, and Control" by Heather Forbes. I think maybe I'll end with that. The only other thing I'd recommend is a website called "Big Life Journal" for kids. They actually have an amazing podcast that they just started. They just did episode three. If you like this podcast, you'd probably like their podcast. It's called "Big Life Kids Podcast." They have downloads. You can sign up to get their printables, and then you can do these podcasts with your kids. What they teach is emotional intelligence and resiliency. It teaches your kids how to bounce back from hard things, how to interact with other people, and how to have good relationships with themselves and other people. It is an amazing resource, so I highly recommend that. We've got to close now because we've gone way over our time, but thank you, Rachel, for coming on.

RACHEL: Thank you.

NATALIE: For the next podcast episode, I think we'll do another episode on this parenting thing because I have a lot I want to talk about that we didn't even get to. Our next podcast will be part two, so this is part one. We'll do part two next time. Until then, fly free.