

## PARALLEL PARENTING PART ONE

NATALIE: Welcome to episode 311 of the Flying Free podcast. I have Diana with me here again today, which, Diana, you heard a couple of weeks ago. I actually, yeah, I think it was maybe a couple of weeks ago and we had so much fun that I decided, I said, do you want to come on again? And let's talk about, so Diana and I are, real life friends now, don't you think?

DIANA: We are. Yeah, definitely.

NATALIE: We are in real-life friends and we actually Marco Polo back and forth. When we're in the mood to just, you know, gab about different things. And we were gabbing one day about parallel parenting and just what that's like. And so I decided to, I said, do you want to do a podcast about this?

And she said, yeah, let's do it. So I put in the forum, our private forum for Flying Free. And if you're interested in Flying Free or Flying Higher, you can go to [joinflyingfree.com](http://joinflyingfree.com) for more info, or [joinflyinghigher.com](http://joinflyinghigher.com) for more info, but we have this private forum and sometimes I'll post questions.

Usually, members are posing questions for us. Diana is a coach inside of Flying Free as well. This time we posted a question for them: what are some of your challenges with parallel parenting? Those of you who are either separated from your husband or even still married to your husband, but you have very different approaches to parenting.

And then some of you are divorced. Give us all your questions about that and we're going to do a podcast about it. We got tons of questions and that is what this episode is going to be about. And I think it's going to be so long that we might end up dividing it into two. So if this episode ends abruptly and you're like wait a minute, the conversation's not over.

It's because it'll be continued next time. Otherwise, if we wrap it up, I don't know yet

DIANA: We'll see what happens.

NATALIE: Exactly. Alright, so before we get started though, I'm gonna explain, I'm gonna read to you what AI says that co-parenting and parallel parenting are, you can go on to ChatGPT and ask any question that you want to, and it just pulls from the internet.

So it just pulled a bunch of things that it got from the internet. And this is what the world says. about co parenting versus parallel parenting, co parenting and parallel parenting are two different approaches to parenting after a separation or divorce. Now, I would argue that it could be even while you're married and during a separation.

The main difference between them is the level of collaboration and communication between the parents. Co-parenting is a collaborative approach where parents work together to make decisions and raise their children. Co-parents typically have open communication channels, they share parenting ideas, and are flexible when changes are needed. Does that sound beautiful?

DIANA: You changed your tone to make it sound lovely as well, because that's what it sounds like. It's like your dream, what you would have loved to experience.

NATALIE: Exactly. That's co-parenting. So when you hear people out there saying you need to learn how to co parent, Diana, what's the problem with that?

DIANA: Well, if only one person is willing to come to the table and be collaborative, and the other, pushes against that, challenges it, and keeps throwing wrenches into it, there's no way it can work.

NATALIE: That's right. Co-parenting implies that you're working together. We're co. What are some other, like cohabiting, we're co. What are some other words that are co?

DIANA: Cooperating.

NATALIE: Yes. Perfect.

DIANA: Collaborating, cooperating, co-parenting.

NATALIE: Yes.

DIANA: It's a harmonious, it's a coming together.

NATALIE: Yes. And the word coming together starts with CO as well, so that, that'll be, that's a good brain like hook to remember that. All right. Parallel parenting. On the other hand, I want you to picture. When you're going parallel to something, like, let's say that you're on a freeway.

Have you ever been on a freeway where there's construction? We have this in our city

right now. There's construction on this freeway, and it actually divides in the middle, if you're in the right hand lane, you go a different direction.

You're still going that direction, but you're on a different road. And then the people who happen to be in the left lane, they split off. And they're also going the same direction. You end up at the same place. Actually, that's where the analogy breaks down though. So maybe forget that analogy.

DIANA: I love, we'll just stop your analogy before it gets to the end.

I love your analogies and how it's like, if we can just think of it in part, it'll help us.

NATALIE: Yes. So you're on the same, you're both parenting. That's the part that's the same. You're both parents.

DIANA: And the children happen to be the same children.

NATALIE: Yes, exactly. but that's where the comparisons are end up breaking down.

You're on two different roads. You have two different ideas. It's a more rigid approach where parents make decisions independently. You're on your own road and have little direct contact with each other. I can't have a car accident with the person in the left lane because there's a bunch of trees and it's, in between us because it's a different, they're on a different road

Parallel parents often have separate parenting styles and rules and communication is limited to essential, information about the children. Parallel parenting is a child rearing arrangement where each parent has equal rights and responsibilities, even though your husband is emotionally and spiritually manipulative, he is a human, and he is a father, and he does have equal rights and responsibilities that you have.

That is just the reality of the situation. We'd like to think that all of those rights and responsibilities get stripped because he's nasty. But unfortunately in this world, nasty people also have rights and responsibilities. But maintains their own parenting style and limits contact with the other parent

It's often recommended for families experiencing high levels of conflict or when co-parenting isn't working. All right, so...

DIANA: And you're right that can happen while you're still married.

NATALIE: Yes, absolutely. Because...

DIANA: Even though it's, if you look the internet, it's going to describe it always for when you look at parallel parenting, it's going to describe it for divorced couples.

But I know so many people, so many women, because that's the people I'm talking to, who, uh, It's really hard. They're basically parallel parenting while they're still married because there still is no cooperation.

NATALIE: Yes. It's almost so when you're, maybe like a homeschooling mom, this is just an example, a homeschooling mom. I only say homeschooling mom because I know a lot of us either homeschooled or are homeschooling.

You're at home all day with your kids and running the home the way you would parent but when dad comes in the door if he's being controlling or coercive and you're not on the same page now he's in charge.

The atmosphere is going to feel different. The parenting is going to be very different. The kids are going to react and respond very differently in that situation. And that would be the same thing.

DIANA: Yeah. Yeah. It makes me think of this simple example, but my sister would tell me about when her kids were little, she was trying to feed them healthy and not give them soda and things like that.

And so she had a no soda rule for the house and her husband at the time. Like, kind of agreed to it. And yet what he would do is come home from work and give the boys the coke. And she's, and they'd get all riled up on sugar at the end of the day and stuff. And that's just a real simple example of, well, they're still in the same home, but wanting to have some sort of, established structure and things you agree on, but then one person's just not willing to participate.

And since you have no control over the other parent of your children, unfortunately. You can't change the way they're doing anything.

NATALIE: Right.

DIANA: And if we're divorced and we wish the other parent would parent differently, it would be nice to think, "Oh, well we could get some agreement." Even if you have an agreement on parenting that was a part of your divorce agreement, you both signed off

on it, it's a legal document.

There's still no control over that other person and usually no recourse unless something very severe is happening that's putting the child in physical danger.

NATALIE: Yeah. Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

DIANA: And it's frustrating.

NATALIE: Yep. My mom always used to say, when you said, you know, we could wish that they might parent in the ways that we wish that they would. But my mom always used to say, wish in one hand and spit in the other and see which one gets full first.

That was like her way of teaching us. It's fine, you can make wishes, but reality is gonna come up and slap you in the face on a regular basis then, and it doesn't feel good.

DIANA: Yeah, so I would say too, it's okay to still have desires.

NATALIE: Yeah.

DIANA: It's still okay to have desires for how it could work if you could get on the same page because you don't, you may not totally want to give up.

Sometimes people change. So still have the desire. Maybe I'm desiring we'll come together on this, because maybe you'll come up with some creative ideas to make it work. But on the other hand, we have to know it could be very unlikely. So it's still have the desire and do what you can to work toward it, but then also let go and don't have the expectation that the other person ever will cooperate.

If they do, you can be pleasantly surprised and that will benefit the kids. But you know what? If they don't, I think one of the worries that I looked at a lot of the posts, questions people had in the parallel parenting, and a lot of it is kind of based on, how can I get us on the same page. Or this detrimental thing, like the kids just get to do, eat whatever they want, stay up late, don't have to do homework, and then they come back to me, they're all riled up, and the homework's not done, and they haven't eaten healthy, and they're in dirty clothes, and we can't get on the same page.

Now I totally forgot what I was going to say. What do you think I was going to say?

NATALIE: I'm not sure. I was actually very interested to see right here. Oh my gosh. This

happens to me all the time.

DIANA: This is why we're friends. And you don't edit your podcast. I'm like, if you were on my podcast, I would just edit that out, but that's not happening on yours.

You just do like real life conversations.

NATALIE: Oh gosh, I love it. And you know what? All the people that are listening right now, they're all coming up with their own, their brains are finishing that thought.

DIANA: Finish it for me.

NATALIE: And it's beautiful.

DIANA: Because you have your own wisdom about this.

NATALIE: Yes.

DIANA: The point I wanted to make, ultimately, probably, was that we need to get to a point for our own sanity, to realize we have no control over any of that.

The more we think, if I could just get him to put my child to bed by 10 p.m. instead of letting him stay up until 1. If I could just get him to help the child with the homework so I don't have to spend all of my time trying to help them with homework and we don't get to do anything fun because they've done all the fun.

If I could just get that to happen, everything would be okay. But then we're kind of punishing ourselves the whole time, feeling frustrated because it won't happen, being angry because they're not doing it right. And that does spill out into the way we're parenting our kids. Imagine if the homework's not done, now it's Monday night, and we're like: since you didn't do get a chance to do your homework all weekend because nobody helped you, I'll help you tonight.

And we're coming at it frustrated.

NATALIE: Yes.

DIANA: Instead of how would we rather show up as a mom, when the other parent isn't supporting our efforts.

NATALIE: Yeah, that is a great point. That exact issue actually was an issue for me when I was first, separated and divorced.

I, or actually I should say divorce because when we were separated, my husband really didn't spend a lot of time with the kids. But after we were divorced, then he got them more. And I thought that he would show up for them on home, and help them with homework and stuff.

And he didn't. And I actually had to make a decision early on that I was the parent that was going to be the homework parent and not him. And then once I made that decision deep inside of myself I became the homework parent and I actually took pride in it. And that's what I do with my kids when they have to go to their dads. They usually leave in the afternoon about an hour after they get home from school. So that first hour I'm doing homework with the kids before they go over to their dad's house. So, and it's just, it's something I do. And I actually love it that I get to do it now because it's my time with the kids undivided time with that child who needs homework. It's really just one child now, but, it used to be more.

DIANA: Can I point out something that you said? So this is the way my brain works. And a lot of the people I work with, they love how they all call it reframing. It's different from reframing in my mind. It's like noticing what our values are.

It's kind of declaring who we are and how we want to show up. It's changing the narrative in our brains. But it's got to be something that we believe and align with what we want and what we care about. So I want to point out what you said: I'll be the one that helps them with the homework.

And so I wrote down a list of statements that I would give myself in my own life for things like this, or help people I coach with. And I'm the one is one of them. Like, I'm the one. My kids need someone consistent to come to who can listen to them. Well, I'm the one. My kids need homework help and it's not coming from the other parent.

Great. I'm the one. The kids need to eat healthy, as much as I can make it happen. Well, I'm the one. Sorry, kids. You know, I'm feeding you broccoli and chicken and whole grains because I love you and I care. And I'm, I'm the one who's going to do this for you.

NATALIE: Right. The parent that feeds you food that is going to nourish your bodies.

And I know you probably don't like it. I don't really like food that nourishes my body either that much. I would much rather eat pop and candy. You know, I'm like you guys.

Exactly. But I'm the one who feeds all of us healthy food.

DIANA: I am the one. Wouldn't it be great if somebody would step up and make sure our family ate healthy food that made our bodies work better? Great. It'll be me. I'm the one.

NATALIE: Exactly. I love that.

DIANA: Yeah.

NATALIE: I think fear is what holds us back too. I think we're afraid that if my kids are drinking pop all the time when they're over at their dad's house, then they're going to get cancer. And our brain will think of these catastrophic things that could happen because this other person is not doing our way.

And I've had to be onto my own brain with that too. Like there's a part of me that's like constantly screaming that the sky is falling if it doesn't go my way. And I have realized over the years, the sky will not fall if my kids eat a bunch, don't do their homework at dad's or eat a bunch of candy bars at their dad's.

DIANA: Yeah. I've worked so hard to let go a lot of that stuff too. And I saw one of the things that I am thinking about constantly in this conversation is my own childhood because my parents were divorced when I was three. And while I believe they did a little bit of co-parenting, it actually probably mostly surrounded my older sister who had meningitis when she was three months old and she had developmental delays in school and other things.

And she needed special classes and sometimes she had psychologists and went to a special school. And so they were able to come together and do some co-parenting around my sister, but I don't think they paid much attention to then me and my other sister who didn't have those special needs. And so it was one way at my dad's house and a different way at my mom's. They were very different people. At my dad's house, we would have a different set of rules. We would eat different kinds of foods. He had lots of money and could take us on trips and lived at a lake house and do all these different things. He would also make us do chores and work.

He had a point system. We'd work for points and then we'd get paid 75 cents a point.

NATALIE: Oh, interesting. I kind of like that, actually.



DIANA: And all this stuff that never happened at my mom's. And the way he disciplined was completely different. And my mom was a lot more... and so we had to conform. We always were trying to conform to what would make my dad happy.

What would he like? How can we show up so dad appreciates us? Because we always wanted his approval. We were starving for it. He didn't say a lot of affection. And so if we could fall in line, then we would believe that he was happy with us. And so we were always trying to make him happy by living in his system.

And then we'd go to my mom's and she didn't have a system for us like that. She wanted us to... what are your talents? What do you like doing? Tell me more about that. She was curious. She loved us the way we were. And then she also taught us all about Jesus.

When she started believing in Jesus. He was basically telling us that she was crazy. And my mom never let any of the stuff that he may or may not say about her, bother her.

And she just showed up to try to be the best mom she could be to give continual, unconditional love. And try to help us flourish. And in some ways was a lot of hands off in a lot of ways. She didn't need us to mold into anything. And it was very different. And so, 'cause you were talking about something bad gonna happen. My mom might have worried, are they gonna just grow up and be like, secular money is important, powerhouse people who don't love Jesus.

That was probably one of her fears. And it didn't happen, by the way. So even though my parents were divorced when I was very young, when I was five, six, seven years old, I remember seeing the differences and taking note and learning from both, and I was still my own person.

NATALIE: Yeah. You know, I would argue that your mom, maybe, maybe those things crossed her mind, but did she have those deep-seated fears?

I don't think so, because I think if she did, she would have operated from a completely different frame of rough frame of mind.

DIANA: I believe she might've had the fears. But she was so close to Jesus in her relationship. She was constantly releasing, constantly releasing. She tells me about that. She's like, every week I was like releasing it and trusting God, releasing it and trusting God.

So all the fears did come up and concerns and frustrations and the pain from the sacrifices. We went to my dad's every single weekend, Friday. As soon as my dad was off of work until Sunday night and so she got us on school days and that there's go to school, come home, have a snack, do your homework, have a meal, watch a TV show together, take your bath, go to bed.

She didn't get any like fun time with us. So the pain of sacrificing and missing out and not having a lot of holidays with us, because if they were on a weekend, guess where we were? At my dad's. And so, I think I've adopted this for myself in my own situation as a divorced mom, where I'm just trusting that my kids are going to find their way and God's got them.

And they're going to get a whole lot of different experiences at both houses. It's very different. And God's got them. They don't worry about me. So at the holidays, sometimes I see them for a couple of hours, and their dad gets them for a day and a half because they want to make sure he's happy, and that he's taken care of and, you know.

NATALIE: Because they have to because he's not able to do that himself.

DIANA: And they trust that I'm okay.

NATALIE: Yes.

DIANA: I do make sure I'm okay.

NATALIE: Exactly. Exactly. That is so regulating. That is such a regulating gift that you're giving to them. Your, when they're in your presence, they know that you're, that you are safe within yourself and regulated within yourself.

And that helps to regulate them. But then when they go to dad's and they not, they might not be able to articulate that, but when they go to dad's house. Dad and me, dad is using them. Dad's love for them is what can you give to me to regulate me so that I'm happy, so that I am a good dad, so that I can show up and, you know, be on my best behavior for you.

They are managing all of that. That's a burden that they carry.

DIANA: Yes.

NATALIE: That they don't have to carry when they're with you. I think that's a huge gift.

DIANA: They tell me that their dad is evolving and getting better and I just choose to believe that, you know, that that has a likelihood that that's possible.

And yet they all know. Now three of them are adults and one's a teenager and they know that, considering dad's emotions as a part of what they do. And because they notice it, that's healthy.

NATALIE: Yes. Yes. Yeah.

DIANA: Okay. So we're a little off of the parallel parenting. So let's go back.

NATALIE: Yeah. Well, not really though, cause this was all about parallel parenting, but I do want to finish my intro because AI had more to say.

DIANA: Oh, you never finished your intro?

NATALIE: No. This is why I'm saying it's like maybe, maybe this will be like four episodes. I don't know. The first episode is the intro.

DIANA: Yeah, this is the intro to our next two podcasts on parallel parenting.

NATALIE: All right, go for it. I just wanted to give, what AI said was they, they gave a few examples, like characteristics of parallel parenting. So I'm going to throw those out there for what they're worth. Number one is separate schedules.

So parents have their own routines and schedules for when their children are with them. They're not going to attend the same events, probably, or appointments, or school functions. Now, sometimes, obviously, if the kids have a choir concert at the same school, then obviously you share that, that choir concert.

But if the dad has the kids when that concert's taking place, then dad brings them and dad can keep them after. It's like at our school, sometimes we'll have a bake sale afterwards. Well, let's say that usually, dad will hang out with them at the bake sale, but let's say that dad didn't like that, and he wanted to just take them home right away.

Well, then they'd have to go home right away. Now, in this case, that's a bad example because that's not true for our case, but it could be true for someone else's case. All right. Another thing is limited communication. Parents usually communicate in writing

such as through email, text messages, or a co-parenting app.

I recommend Our Family Wizard. They might also use a communication book to pass notes back and forth. So those are different ways. We actually did that when I was still living with my ex. I started writing notes and then just asking him to write things down in response because otherwise he would gaslight me and he would say, you never said that you, I never, or he would say, he never said something.

So I wanted to have it in writing. I'm like, we're writing everything down now because I would say this because my brain is so addled, I can't remember a thing that I say or that you say, so please help me out, help me remember. Okay. Clear boundaries. Parents establish clear guidelines for their involvement in their children's lives.

They might have agreements about phone, cell phones, internet usage, and dating guidelines. So these are things that are going to be different at each house. And I know that there's been questions in our forum about how, you know, my husband wants them to have a phone and, and lets them use their phone at night.

And I don't want them to have a phone and I don't want them to be on social media. Those are differences.

DIANA: And there's nothing you can do about it.

NATALIE: There's nothing you can do.

DIANA: While they're there.

NATALIE: Yes, exactly.

DIANA: When they come to your house, you can put the phones in the safe and lock them up if you'd like.

NATALIE: Yeah, decision-making. Parents make decisions about their children's lives independently, such as medical appointments, schooling, and extracurricular activities. Now this does get muddy. This is where it's like, Okay, I don't know. Because think about it, medical appointments, we have had people in the forum who have had issues with their child needing to be seen.

I actually had this. I wanted my children to be seen by a certain therapist and he said no. So then it was like, okay, well, what therapist would it be okay for the kids to see?

Give me three names and then let's go for it. Well, he never came up with three names. So I did. I just came up with three names and said, you pick.

Because I didn't care. Whichever three of those was fine. So that's what we did. That's how you can kind of compromise with these people. But the point is some people don't need to go in to get immunizations for example, one person might be all about vaccines. The other person might be anti-vaccine.

That's like a big one. These are things you want to, if you have big issues, by the way, like that, you need to get that in the divorce agreement. You need to get those are big things that don't wait till after the divorce to try to figure that stuff out. You have to figure that out beforehand. And you have a judge sign off on it because otherwise, going back to try to get your divorce agreement changed is much harder than just getting it nailed down to begin with.

And I'm going to do a plug for the Prep for Divorce course in Flying Free.

DIANA: That course is so good.

NATALIE: It's very comprehensive. Yeah. I do not recommend going through a divorce if you have not, if you are not prepared. And that course will prepare you. It not only, I mean, it's got like, we have built, it keeps developing that core.

I keep adding stuff to it, but people in our community who have gotten divorced over the years have given like, there's this one lesson that's just all of their advice. They're like, my divorce is over. Here's what I would have done differently.

DIANA: Yeah.

NATALIE: You get the benefits of learning from other people's mistakes, as well as other people's like genius ideas that they had that are really serving them now, post-divorce. So, I mean, that's just like one example of something that's in that course.

DIANA: The one that stands out to me from that course would be profiling your soon to be ex. Or even if you're already divorced and you come and join the program, get in that divorce course and do the profiling for your ex. Because in parallel parenting, knowing who that other person is, but what the profiling your, that person does, forces you to put it on paper and admit this is who the person is.

This is how they act. I know it. Cause I spent years with them. This is what I can expect.

And so it helps release, your expectations beyond who they are. Just, you know, they're just going to be them. So you don't have to be frustrated about them being them. So I love that in the divorce course.

NATALIE: Yes. Yeah. I think we spend so much of our marriages in denial about who they are. But you know your partner in better than anybody else on this planet. If you've been living with them for any length of time.

DIANA: Yes.

NATALIE: And, and so. Don't be, rather than being in denial, like, Oh, well, I'm sure they could change. Or this isn't the person that I married.

Actually, that is the person you married. And they are very consistent. If you look back, there's that sort of thing too. People in the forum will say something will happen and they'll say, it's so weird. I'm so shocked that he did this thing. And when we dig in deeper, we find out that he's done this thing a million times before.

So this is what, this is like an example of how we just are in denial. We don't want to believe that this is who, yeah, this is who they are. So that little profiling exercise will help you to like, look at the bold-faced truth or bald-faced truth. Is it boldface truth?

DIANA: I don't know.

NATALIE: It could be either, I think. Look at the truth and then make your decisions based on reality, not based on, well, I'm sure they're just a little puppy dog inside and they don't mean to. And yeah, they do. And that's how they, even if they don't mean to, that's how they do. My ex would always say that he'd go, well, I didn't mean that.

And I'd say, nevertheless, that is what you did.

DIANA: Yeah, I watched the Behavior Panel on YouTube. I love them. And this one guy, Greg Hartley always says: the organism does what has made the organism successful. And so whatever patterns they've had in their life that they've used over and over to navigate life, whether it's healthy or not, it's made them successful in their navigation.

They're going to keep doing it. It's who they are.

NATALIE: Yeah. Yeah. That, I love that. That's a great way to look at that. All right. Before we get into the questions, and I think I'm going to do, we're going to do one more thing

and then that's going to be the end of this episode and then we're going to get into the questions.

DIANA: We're just intro-ing it.

NATALIE: Yeah, this is just the intro. I love that. It's like a podcast cliffhanger.

DIANA: I think continuing podcasts is fun. Because you know what's going to happen, everybody listening between now and the next episode, put your brain to work to think about parallel parenting and what's, what have you already heard today that is going to be helpful to you at your stage of parenting and get your brain to work.

And then when you come and listen to the next episode, it's going to be even that much richer because your brain's already been working on it.

NATALIE: Yes, yes, I totally agree with that. I love that. I like to listen to books, another rabbit trail. I like to listen to books on Audible. And then if they're really, really good, and I got a lot of aha moments, I'll get the book either in Kindle or I'll get a hard copy and I'll read it again.

And so I can visually see the sentences. And that will, and by the time I'm reading it again, my brain will have already kind of, noodled with it a little bit, and I'll, and I get more insight. It actually helps to solidify some of the major concepts.

DIANA: I just did that with a book. You might have heard of it. It's called All the Scary Little Gods. I listened to it on Audible. And then just last week when it was on sale, by the time this airs, it might not be on the ridiculous sale anymore but I bought the Kindle version while it was on sale so I can read it now with my eyes instead of hearing it and get different layers and different experience out of it. So, I'm looking forward to doing that.

NATALIE: Oh cool, I love that. Yeah, if you, this is going to air in the new year, but just so you know, I always put my books, the Kindle version of my books on sale in the holidays after Thanksgiving. So between Thanksgiving and the New Year, they always go on sale for two \$99. So you can wait till next holiday season. All right. So someone had brought up in the forum about how she had been, I don't know if she was like getting coached from a narcissist recovery coach or if she was taking a class from them, but this narcissist recovery coach had coined her own terms and definitions around this whole idea of parallel parenting.

Basically, this coach defined parallel parenting in the way that the rest of the world talks about co-parenting. She was calling that parallel parenting. And then she created this new term called counter parenting. And then when I looked at her definition of counter-parenting, it was the exact same as the way the rest of the DV world calls parallel parenting.

So I don't think this is helpful. And here's why. Number one, it adds a layer of confusion to a demographic that is already highly confused and in a bunch of brain fog. And I don't know what the purpose of adding another term in there is. I don't care if you call it Gaga Parenting versus Gugu Parenting.

I don't care what it's called. What is Gaga Parenting? And what is Gugu Parenting? What does it mean? And how do we use what those things are to gain a framework for viewing our parenting versus how our soon-to-be ex or our ex is parenting? For the purpose of this podcast episode, which is just now going to end and the next, the next one as well.

Hold on, I lost my place.

DIANA: We're going to call it co-parenting and parallel parenting. We're not going to talk about counter parenting. I play words with friends. I look up synonyms in my dictionary. I am just, I freak out about the definition of words.

And when you call it counter-parenting, you're putting on a whole another layer of what you're doing is you're making it feel combative. Counterparenting sounds like you're in a battle, where parallel parenting sounds a lot more freeing. Yes. I can do something in parallel parenting.

I can be me. I can flourish as a mom here. And while that other parallel parenting is happening, I will focus on this and do my best. And I don't have to counter, fight against, undo. You know, we'll talk about this as we continue, but I can just speak truth, and I don't have to counter anything else or work against it.

I'm going to show up as the best mom I can. So I think parallel parenting is a much better term and a lot less, I don't have to gear up for battle. I don't have to be a gladiator.

NATALIE: Right. Exactly. Yeah. So speaking of that idea, like I'm thinking of someone on a journey, we have a Christian audience.



Pilgrim's progress. Pilgrim is trying to make some progress on this journey. Okay. And when he engages in battle, is he moving forward when he's battling?

DIANA: No, you have to stop all your forward. Yeah. You just have to, and how long will that battle last? Will you be stationed at the same place and feel like you're not making any progress and you can't move forward until the battle's won?

NATALIE: Exactly. And what was the, do you remember Pilgrim's Pride? What was the biggest thing that he did that actually enabled him to have forward movement in his life?

DIANA: I actually don't know anything about Pilgrim's Progress.

NATALIE: Oh, it's so funny. Before I asked it, I was like, I wonder if she's read the book. I hope she has, but maybe not. Okay. So those of you who guys, those of you who have read the book and even those of you who don't, what he does is he has to get rid of his burden. He has to lay it down. He has to let it go. He's carrying this big, huge pack of all this stuff on his back and he can hardly walk because it's such a burden.

And so until he lets that go, he takes it off of his back and just lays it down. He's not free. He's making very slow progress. And then throughout his journey, he does engage in these different battles and stuff, but their battles, they illustrate battles within ourselves. And it's only until he lets go of each of these things that he is finally able to then move on to the next level.

So when I think back on my own journey up and out. When I was fighting, there's a time to fight. Okay. There's a time when the fight comes to you, the fights coming to you and there's nothing to be done for it, but you need to engage in that battle. But, there is also a time where it needs to be, you need to be done fighting and you need to let go and trust there's that, that's what I would say the faith comes in.

Trust that God is going to take care of you. God's going to take care of your kids. Does that mean that you're all going to be successful and healthy and wealthy and wise? No, that's not what being taken care of means. It means that you can have peace and joy in your life, no matter what your circumstances are like.

So anyway, co-parenting, gaga parenting, co-parenting means working together in peace and harmony for the good of the children. Did I say that beautifully enough?

DIANA: You did say it beautifully again. It's so hopeful.

NATALIE: Yes, and Gugu parenting or parallel parenting means working alone for the good of our children and letting go of what the other parent chooses to do when it's their parenting time.

Now, of course, I have to have a caveat because otherwise I'll get emails. I'm not talking about letting go of your children and just going, whatever happens to you happens. And if your children are being physically, abused or sexually molested, that is a different conversation than what we are talking about here in, in parallel.

Okay. This conversation is for the vast majority of our listeners who are here because they are in emotionally and spiritually abusive relationships. And if they are divorced, then their children's father is emotionally and spiritually manipulative towards the children as well. And by the way, there is a huge percentage of the world's population who operates out of emotional and spiritual manipulation in order to meet their needs.

They believe that's how they get their needs met. They're operating at a very low emotionally intelligent level. So this conversation is really not only about parallel parenting, but it's about how to get along in this world, a world with a huge percentage of the population that are operating on this lower level.

Do we go down to that level and fight and battle on that level? Are we going to all also operate from a place of fear and shame and anger and hatred? And, it's my way or the highway, or can we operate on a different level? Let them operate down here. And yes, your kids are going to get exposed to that.

But when kids get exposed to that as well as getting exposed to love and peace and joy. It inoculates, it gives them, just like you said, that you experienced when you were growing up. Now they get to see what truth is. They get to see what, when you, when you grow up in a family where everything is hidden, and there is a lot of abuse there, but we're calling it love.

This is family love. We do what mom always says, you know, when we gather at Thanksgiving and all the adults and the grandchildren are around, mama, we do what she says to keep her happy. That's called love. You know, don't ever share your political thoughts or don't ever share your... actually, I don't recommend sharing your political thoughts, but anyway...

DIANA: I agree, but I'm not today.

NATALIE: Exactly. There are times that when you need to go into families and you need

to just keep the peace, but that to think that that's healthy and that's okay, is different from going into that situation and going, this is probably not the healthiest situation, but this is how I'm going to operate when I am working with and dealing with people like this.

I'm going to stop. I've kind of blabbed.

DIANA: Well, I would just say so parallel, as we get ready to go on to the next episode, you know, let's let parallel parenting have that nice sweet tone too. And we get to parallel parents when the other person is doing it completely different from you and it's confusing for your children.

We are the ones, we're the moms. Who bring unconditional love and we bring truth and we have established rules to bring order and teach our kids wonderful things about how to be emotionally regulated, how to manage different people in this world. How to grow and show up as the best version of yourself.

Look at me kids, I'm doing it. And I want to give you the tools so you can do it too. Even though everyone else in the world might not be doing it or a lot of people aren't doing it. So let's do that together, kids. So I'd say parallel parenting can be a beautiful opportunity for us. And I think we'll hit on that as we're answering questions.

NATALIE: Yes.