

[00:00:00.650] - Lisa Qualls

Welcome to the Adoption Connection Podcast where we offer resources to equip you and stories to inspire you on your adoption journey. I'm Lisa Qualls.

[00:00:10.390] - Melissa Corkum

And this is Melissa Corkum. Don't worry, we get it, and we're here for you.

[00:00:18.720] - Lisa Qualls

Today is a Mentor Moments episode where we answer a listener question. These episodes give you a chance to join the conversation and guarantee we're providing the most helpful tools and resources for exactly where you are. This week's question is, "What do I do if I don't like my child? I never thought I would feel this way. Can you help?"

[00:00:39.320] - Melissa Corkum

So Interestingly enough, even though this question is really hard to say out loud or even admit for a lot of parents, we hear from parents who have a similar question or having similar experiences quite a bit and Lisa, you and me have both had experiences with our kids in seasons where we found ourselves asking the same very vulnerable question. So I think the first thing we want to say is, you are not alone. You are not a bad parent if you can relate to this question. So I wanted to start there.

[00:01:19.150] - Lisa Qualls

Yeah, the first time someone asked me this question, like, flat out was way way back in 2012, when I was writing a lot on my blog and someone asked me a question very much like this. And I remember thinking, wow, how brave to ask that question. And then when I actually shared it on my blog, I mean, the response was huge. So many parents writing in about their own struggles, and it wasn't about do I love this child? It was about I just "I don't feel the like" which is what one of the women said and I was like, yes, I understand exactly what she's talking about.

[00:01:56.130] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah. And so we started talking about this a couple of years ago. Lisa, you were preparing to speak at a conference kind of around this topic and I was reading some Dan Hughes books for the first time. I was reading Brain Based Parenting by Hitman John Baylin. I was also reading Building the Bonds of Attachment, and both of them mention this thing that happens to parents when there's kind of this non reciprocal relationship with the child. Yeah, so either the child's behaviors are really challenging or maybe the child is just flat up, like rejecting the parent, whatever reason. And Dan Hughes gave a name to this, we'll call it phenomenon or the way the nervous system responds in the situation, and he called it Blocked Care. And I had this, like, light bulb moment. I remember voxering Lisa and being like, oh, my gosh, Lisa, it has a name, like, we should be talking about this more. Why didn't anyone ever tell me?

[00:03:04.060] - Lisa Qualls

Well, and I remember that moment because I didn't know it had a name. I thought it was, you know, a lot of parents are experiencing this in isolation. We're not talking about it because it feels and sounds terrible. And when I read there was actual brain science behind what I was feeling and experiencing, I actually, I cried because I had just been carrying so much shame about this. You know, I'd always believed I was a good mom, and I was a really loving mom. And to feel these feelings toward one of my children, it just, it was a crisis for me in terms of my own identity of who I believed I was. And so learning it was actual brain science, learning there was an actual name, blocked care, and that there were professionals who knew about this, it was actually a huge relief to me.

[00:03:55.020] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah and I think for me, blocked here for me didn't just show up in my relationship with our most challenging child, it started bleeding over into all aspects of my life. And I remember my husband looking at me one day and just saying, like, I don't know who I married. Like, you're the meanest person I know right now. And, you know, so I was having not just, like, a parental like identity crisis, I was having, like, a whole person identity crisis. Like, I didn't like who I was not just with my child or my children, but just everyone. And I was, like, turning into a quote, unquote, like, "bad." I was definitely a

grumpy parent to everyone, even my kids, who were kind of typical kids who didn't have these really high needs and big, challenging behaviors. And I was just grumpy with everyone all the time. So finding out that this was just a symptom of my nervous system protecting itself in a really hard situation was so, so helpful. And then, of course, I'm our resident brain science nerd. Whenever there's brain science for something, I feel like that also tells us that there are answers for things as well.

[00:05:13.600] - Lisa Qualls

I mean, now we know from all the study we've done, which we've done a lot together now about blocked care. We know that when our children come to us and they're so wounded and they have developed a protective mechanism toward connection. And then here we are as the parents, and we're trying to reach for them and connect with them, but they aren't able to receive it. And it's not through their own fault or anything, but it feels like it's just bouncing off sort of. And after a while, it really does the way our brains function. And we teach a lot about that in our courses on blocked care.

[00:05:50.690] - Melissa Corkum

Yeah. So it's important to know that there are, like, official signs of blocked care. We name nine, and there are types of blocked care, right. So sometimes there as parents, we may experience blocked care, even if a child is not rejecting us, maybe they have something, a neuro difference, maybe like autism and so they just aren't able to give socially and reciprocally the way our nervous system is expecting. Or maybe there's something going on with our own nervous system or our own body that's causing our caregiving systems to kind of protectively shut down. So we talk about all of this in a free training that we have here at the Adoption Connection called the Compassion Challenge. So we would invite you, so that the end of that question was "Help. Can you help us?" And the answer is yes, we can. So we would invite if you're listening to this podcast and you're thinking, yeah, that's me. I am struggling to feel the love for my child. We would invite you to go to theadoptionconnection.com/compassion and sign up for the Free Compassion Challenge training. It has touched on hundreds and hundreds, probably close to 1000. Yeah, thousands of lives already. And the feedback that we get and the emails that we get from you all are just incredible. And so we just feel really honored to bring this information that I think unlocks a whole lot of shame. It relieves a whole lot of shame from parents. And I think that, you know, unlocking parents from shame and guilt, help them be better parents. So we would just really encourage you to go grab that training if you're struggling with what maybe you now know has a name, blocked care.

[00:07:45.110] - Lisa Qualls

Right, we really want to help you renew your hope because there is hope. Your brain can heal, your caregiving ability can come back online, these feelings can change, and we know how important that is because we know that you are good parents. We tell you this every episode. You're a good parent doing good work. And we really believe that we believe that you have the capacity to heal and experience a richer, connected relationship with your child. And so we hope you'll take advantage of this free offer.

[00:08:18.590] - Lisa Qualls

It gives us a lot of joy. It really does. You can sign up for our Free Compassion Challenge at theadoptionconnection.com/compassion.

[00:08:29.530] - Melissa Corkum

Before you go, we'd love to connect with you on social media. You can find us on Instagram as [@theadoptionconnection](https://www.instagram.com/theadoptionconnection). Or better yet, join our free Facebook community at theadoptionconnection.com/facebook.

[00:08:43.150] - Lisa Qualls

Thanks so much for listening, we love having you. And remember, you're a good parent doing good work.

[00:08:51.100] - Melissa Corkum

The music for the podcast is called New Day and was created by Lee Rosevere.