

Ep #37: How to Stop People Pleasing



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With Your Host

Lisa Candra

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You are listening to episode 37 of *The Autism Mom Coach*, How to Stop People Pleasing. In last week's episode I invited you to examine the areas in your life where people pleasing shows up, the places where you are saying yes when you want to say no, or where you are just doing things in hopes that other people will think well of you.

These are examples of people pleasing, the insidious habits so many of us engage in often at the expense of our own time, our own wellbeing and most of all our own connection to ourselves and to the people in our lives that we are trying to people please because very often when we are people pleasing and just doing things because we think we should, it's not creating more connection with the people we're trying to please. It's actually creating less, it's creating less connection and more resentment.

The good news is that people pleasing is a choice. We can choose another path but it is usually not as easy as just noticing it and stopping because this is a well-worn habit and it's a socially acceptable and encouraged practice. Dead stopping is not easy and it doesn't even need to be the goal. Small changes can go a really long way, 10% less people pleasing is a really big deal, but how?

How to shift from doing things because you always have and everyone expects you to, to figuring out what you really want and acting in alignment with your own values. For that it is helpful to have a strategy which is exactly what I have for you in this episode. Keep listening.

Welcome to *The Autism Mom Coach*, a podcast for moms who feel overwhelmed, afraid, and sometimes powerless as they raise their child with Autism. My name is Lisa Candra. I'm a certified life coach, lawyer, and most importantly I'm a full-time single mom to a teenage boy with Autism. In this podcast I'll show you how to transform your relationship with Autism and special needs parenting. You'll learn how to shift away from being a victim of your circumstances to being the hero of the story you get to write. Let's get started.

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Hello and welcome to another episode of the podcast. Before I get to today's topic I want to tell you about an upcoming presentation I am doing for the Autism Services and Resources Center of Connecticut. The presentation is coming up on Thursday November 17th at 6.00pm Eastern and it is called Seven Truths Every Autism Parent Needs to Know. In this presentation I will share with you the most important things I have learned in my 13 plus years of raising a child with Autism, and the two years that I have been coaching moms facing kids with Autism.

This presentation is for you whether your child was recently diagnosed or you've been at this for several years like I have. You can register for this event by going to the show notes where I will leave a link. It is open to the public so you can attend even if you're not from Connecticut. When you register for this event you will also have the opportunity to sign up for my email list which I highly encourage because if you are on my email list you will always be the first to know about presentations like this.

Alright on to how to stop people pleasing. Like I said people pleasing is a pretty well-worn habit that most of us have. So stopping it will take some work. Here are five tips that I have for you on how to stop people pleasing.

First, stop calling it people pleasing. When we call lying to ourselves and lying to others, people pleasing we are likely to believe that we are doing something good or virtuous but we're not. We are deceiving ourselves and deceiving others. So stop calling it people pleasing and remind yourself of what's actually happening here.

Number two, stop telling yourself that you are responsible for other people's emotions. You do not cause other people's feelings. For this you can go back to episode six of the podcast, the self-coaching model where I teach you that it is our thoughts that cause our feelings. That goes for you and that goes for other people too. Their thoughts cause their feelings. Your action or inaction does not cause your friend to be mad, your neighbor to be disappointed or your sister to be happy. The actions that you do or don't take are all circumstances in somebody else's model.

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For example let's say the circumstance is you tell your mother that you will not be celebrating the thanksgiving holiday with the extended family. Instead you are going to stay home because you know that these events are really overwhelming for your child with autism. And you want to have a nice and peaceful day so your decision is we are going to stay home and you let her know this. She then has the thought, the family should be together on thanksgiving. And then that causes her to feel angry or hurt.

Your decision to eat dinner at home is not causing her to feel angry or hurt. It's the thought that she is having about your decision. This is an important distinction to understand because we are so used to believing that we cause other people's emotions. And yes we might do something or not do something that triggers some thoughts in other people that creates these emotions. But it's not the same as us causing their emotions.

When we tell ourselves we are responsible for other people's emotions we deputize ourselves to do whatever we think we need to do in order to influence or manipulate how other people think and feel. But you are not responsible for other people's emotions. You are responsible for your own.

Number three, figure out what you want. This could be really challenging for lifelong people pleasers who have spent so much of their time and effort conflating what other people want and what other people expect into their own wants and needs. One way to figure out what you want is to ask yourself. If no one else truly cared about what I did, what would I choose? If the rude mother in my child's class could care less whether I'd bake cupcakes or send in store bought ones, what would I do?

If strangers on the playground did not care that my child stand and clapped his hands, what would I do? If it was all the same to my mother-in-law whether I canceled a dinner date because I was exhausted, what would I do? And if all else fails and you are still feeling stuck, ask yourself what would my dead honest kid with Autism do in this situation?

Number four, allow the discomfort and do it or don't do it anyway. When you stop people pleasing it may feel really uncomfortable at first. This is

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normal and it is important to really understand this because when we feel uncomfortable our biological instinct is to make the discomfort go away. And for some of us this might look like just giving in and doing the thing you don't want to do anyway because you think it'll just be easier.

It will feel uncomfortable but here is the thing about feelings, all of them, they are temporary, they don't last very long so long as we are not stoking them with our catastrophizing thoughts. So feel the discomfort, ride the wave of emotions and do what you want to do even if other people are not pleased.

Number five, have your own back. When we rely on other people's approval to determine how we feel about ourselves we are stuck in a never ending cycle of looking outside of ourselves for validation. So when we then dip our toe into being honest with people about what we do and don't want it can feel scary and it may cause us to second guess ourselves and our decisions. This is why it is vital to have your own back and validate yourself. This means when the discomfort comes you don't take that as a sign that you are doing something wrong.

You take that as an opportunity to double down on self-love. You can do this by deciding ahead of time what you will tell yourself when you feel the discomfort, the thoughts you want to think on purpose. Some suggestions to get you started. It is okay to say no. It is not my job to please other people. Other people can have their opinions. I can feel uncomfortable. I am safe.

By deciding what you want to think ahead of time and reminding yourself and redirecting yourself to these thoughts when you feel the discomfort, this is all a way of supporting yourself through feeling and processing that emotion versus saying, "Forget it, I'll just do the thing." Alright, that is it for this week, thanks and I will talk to you next week.

Thanks for listening to *The Autism Mom Coach*. If you want more information or the show notes and resources from the podcast, visit theautismmomcoach.com. See you next week.