

Ep #39: The How to Guide for Other Humans (aka Manuals)



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Lisa Candra

Ep #39: The How to Guide for Other Humans (aka Manuals)

You are listening to episode 39 of *The Autism Mom Coach*, How to Guide for Other Humans, aka The Manual.

Our brains love to think that we know how other people should be and how the world should be. My child should talk. They should sleep. They should eat the food that I prepare. They should love the holidays just like I do. They should want to stand in long lines in loud stores eager to sit on a stranger's lap and snap pictures. My partner should listen. They should do chores. They should agree with me about our child's therapist.

They should text me while they are at work. They should not text me while I'm at work. My friends, they should ask me questions about my child with Autism. My friends should stop asking me about Autism. My neighbors should not stare while my child is having a meltdown. My in-laws should offer to babysit and on and on. When you're having these kinds of thoughts, you are working from your own secret operating manual, an instruction book for how other people and the world should operate.

Now, we all have manuals. We all have unwritten rules and expectations about how we think life should be, what other people should do and how they should show up, and how we should show up in the world. And then the world and other people or even ourselves don't comply so then what? Well, we have two options, one, we can cling to our manuals and reinforce the belief that our happiness is dependent on other people following them.

Or we can drop the manuals and allow other people to be who and how they are without making it mean anything about us or our ability to decide how we want to think and feel even when other people or the world aren't following our rules. To learn how, stay tuned.

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

Ep #39: The How to Guide for Other Humans (aka Manuals)

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.

Hello and welcome to the podcast. I hope you are all doing well. Before I get to today's topic I want to ask you if you are listening and if you find this podcast helpful to please rate and review it. Ratings mean that other moms like you will have an easier time finding this podcast. The mom who just got the diagnosis, the mom who was crying in her car, the mom who was walking on eggshells dreading another phone call from the school. That is who this podcast is for. I want to be a different voice in the discussion about Autism parenting.

We are not as powerless as we sometimes feel and I want to share this message and the tools that I teach with as many parents raising a child with Autism as I can. So again if you are listening, if you get value from this podcast, if you want to help other moms like you find this resource, please rate and review. And bonus, I will be giving away a holiday gift to the first five listeners who review the podcast and email me a copy of their review at lisa@theautismmomcoach.com.

The gift is from my favorite place in Philadelphia, Duross & Langel handcrafted soaps. I have been getting my son's staff, gifts there for the last 10 years and this year is no different. So I added a few more soaps, a few more hand creams and a few more chap sticks to share with all of you. So again, if you rate and review the podcast, all you need to do is send me an email of the review and I will send you one of these little packages.

Okay, onto today's episode. How to Guides for Other Humans, aka the manual. This is a really important topic and coaching tool because we all believe that we know how life and other people should be. And we think these ideas are right and that any deviation from them is wrong or a problem. By understanding the concept of the manual we have the

Ep #39: The How to Guide for Other Humans (aka Manuals)

opportunity to distance ourselves from our thoughts about how the world and other people should be and decide how we want to show up when the world and other people don't comply with our rules.

Because here is the truth, when you are having a manual and you are sticking to it you are also sticking to the belief that your happiness, how you feel is dependent on the outside world. If other people show up in these certain ways then I get to feel good and all is well. So fingers crossed that other people and the world cooperate because otherwise you're screwed, but spoiler alert, other people, the world won't. They won't cooperate and clinging to the idea that your emotional wellbeing exist outside of you will leave you in a perpetual state of victimhood, the world is happening to you.

And it isn't, life is happening per usual and you always get to decide how you want to show up even when. So let's get to it. What is a manual? A manual is essentially a metaphor for an unwritten instruction book about how something or really someone should work. A lot of us have these unwritten instruction books about other people and how they are supposed to behave, what they are supposed to do and not do. And what it means to be good parents, a good child, coworker, boss, neighbor, stranger and so on.

We have these manuals for other people and we think if they don't follow them they are the reason that we feel frustrated, annoyed, sad, or angry. To be clear we all have manuals. It's not a matter of if you have it. It is a matter of whether you recognize it and recognize the suffering that you create when you cling to them. There are two things about manuals that I want to make clear. First, they will seem so reasonable and they might even be, like wanting your child to sleep for more than three consecutive hours. Or be able to tell you how she feels when she is sick, so reasonable.

But it's still a manual, it is still your thought about how other people or life should be.

Ep #39: The How to Guide for Other Humans (aka Manuals)

Second, other people will agree with your manuals. Other people who have similar values or similar thoughts to you will agree. Yes, you are right, your kids should not talk back to you. Doctors should call you back. And mother in laws, they should definitely mind their own business. But here is the thing, no matter how reasonable, no matter how many people agree with you, what and how you believe other people or the world should be other people and the world will not cooperate.

Your kids will talk back to you. Your partner won't take the trash out. Your child will get diagnosed with Autism. You believed none of these things should be happening but they are. So when you cling to your manual about how other people, and the world, and even how you are supposed to be and that's not how things are working out, this will create a lot of suffering for you. It results in you resisting reality. And this tension between how you think things should be and how they actually are, are creating more pain and more suffering for you.

So let me give you some examples. I used to have a lot of manuals for people in my life who were not raising special needs kids. So some of my unwritten rules. They should not complain to me about how stressful it is to coordinate extracurricular activities. And my sub thought was, nice problem to have. Very judgmental. Another rule. They should not talk about how well their child is doing when my child is struggling. They should not tell me about their vacations because we have not taken one in years.

I had a manual for myself. I should not lose my patience with my son. I should not hate on people for not having a special needs child. I should never get comfortable and always be looking for the next therapy program or doctor. I had a manual for my son. He is supposed to be respectful. He is not supposed to yell at me. He is supposed to listen to me. He is supposed to use his strategies.

When we do this, when we impose our expectations on other people or the world and they do not cooperate then what? Well, we feel terrible, or

Ep #39: The How to Guide for Other Humans (aka Manuals)

resentful, or angry. And we think it is because of the other people or the world. We think they are responsible for how we feel but they aren't. And this is actually good news. Our emotional wellbeing does not depend on other people or the universe complying with our manuals, we are.

So ask yourself, what would happen, how would your life be different if you set your manuals aside? Now, by this, I don't mean that you can't have expectations, preferences or boundaries. What it means is that you stop being a victim to the things that you cannot predict or control the way other people show up to do life, what happens in the world. These things are out of your control. And so when you let go of your manual about how things should be you let go of the idea that other things outside of you control your emotions.

Putting down your manual means you're taking back your power and you're setting aside your urge to control the entire world. And so when I'm coaching my clients we talk very specifically about our expectations about what other people should do and how they should be. About our expectations of parenthood and how it was supposed to go. About our expectations of our kids and how they are supposed to talk, or go to a regular school, or have friends.

When we do the work of seeing our own manuals we can also see whether they are serving us and moving us forward or keeping us stuck and in pain. And you can do this right now. You can examine what are the unwritten rules that you have about how your life should be, how you should be, how other people should be, how the world should be. Are they serving you? And if not, ask yourself what would it be like to set aside this manual and experience life as it is versus how I think it should be.

The more we lay down these manuals the more peace, the more freedom and the more enjoyment and less suffering we will experience. and let's face it, life is more enjoyable when we aren't fighting it so much and we're just enjoying people for who they are, not who we think they should be. And

Ep #39: The How to Guide for Other Humans (aka Manuals)

we are so much more enjoyable when we accept ourselves as we are without putting conditions on it.

Alright, that's it for this week. Have a great week and remember, please rate and review the podcast. Thanks, and I'll 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.