

Ep #46: Keeping Your Cool During an Autism Meltdown



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With Your Host

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You are listening to episode 46 of *The Autism Mom Coach*, Keeping Your Cool During an Autism Meltdown. Do you ever find yourself melting down right alongside your child even though you 'know' that you should stay calm? You are not alone and it is not your fault. The ability to stay calm and regulated while your child is escalating, it's really hard. It runs counter to our biology and every hardwired instinct that we have to just make it stop. And more than that, no one ever taught us until now.

In this week's episode, I am going to tell you about my new course, Keeping Your Cool during an Autism Meltdown which I specifically created to answer the question, how do I keep my cool while my child is melting down? 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 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 everyone and welcome to the podcast. I am so glad you're here and I am so excited to announce that the Keeping Your Cool course is now available. This is a free course that you can access by going to my website, theautismmomcoach.com, you're going to see a little popup and in that popup, you will enter your email address. From there you will begin to receive the four videos that I created to teach you my before, during and after framework for keeping your cool during a meltdown.

But no spoiler alerts in this episode. Once it's finished I want you to go to my website and sign up for this course and get started. But before you do that I want to spend today's episode talking to you about why I created this course and why it has been so helpful to me and to my clients.

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So first, I created this course and really within the course that I'm going to teach you is my framework. I created this framework to solve a problem that I was having and for which I was unable to identify an existing solution. My son would escalate and I would try to resist it, hold it in, stay calm until I could no longer and I would melt down right alongside of him even though I knew that I should stay calm, even though I knew that this was not helpful. And even though I knew I was still doing it and I have found the same with my clients.

They know intellectually that staying calm is preferable and that they want to stay calm. But when push comes to shove and sometimes quite literally they just don't know how to do it and they are melting down. So why is that? Well, I think the answer is twofold. First, staying calm while someone else, much less your child is escalating, runs counter to our biology. We sense danger in the form of a yelling, screaming, flailing child and we mobilize. Our stress response activates and we are preparing to fight or flee.

We may try to keep it together but if it goes on long enough, we're going to melt down either internally or externally.

Second, no one ever taught us how. As parents raising children with Autism we may receive some informal training or self-directed education about what to do during a meltdown to help our child but never, at least in my experience was I ever taken aside and taught how to regulate myself so that I could remain calm and grounded through an extended meltdown. I was somehow expected to just know. I mean why would this be, because I gave birth? It makes no sense.

Now, I have friends who work in the ABA field and I know that as a regular part of their ongoing training and education is learning how to self-regulate. They attend courses and seminars about the importance of recognizing their own emotional vulnerabilities, that is the things that make them more

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prone to reacting to a behavior so that they can effectively support their clients.

So think about that, people who spend a fraction of the time with our children. They are trained about how to stay regulated but we're not, the very people who are with our children most of the time and who are responsible for implementing strategies, therapies, behavior plans etc. This is such a missed opportunity. So I just want you to know if you are thinking that you should just stay calm, and you shouldn't get angry, and you should just know what to do. I want to offer to you that none of that is true. It is not your fault, you were never taught these skills until now.

These are skills you can learn. If you recall in episode 45 I interviewed my client, Jamie Gregory. She is the mother of twin five-year-olds with Autism. And when she came to me she was really having a difficult time regulating herself while both of her boys were escalating. And so I taught her like I teach all of my clients, the skills that I set forth in this framework that you will learn about in this course and they work. It's a comprehensive method. So I'm not going to say, "Hey, so listen, when your child's getting escalated you should just calm down." Okay, really, not helpful.

I am going to teach you how to create calm for yourself. This is a before, during and after process. This isn't just remember to remind yourself of a positive affirmation. No. Okay, I'm living this life. I have tried all that stuff. I've tried plenty of stuff that doesn't work. This framework, the way I've put it together, the way I teach it, it works. And if it works for me, and if it works for Jamie, and if it works for all the other clients that I have taught it to, it will work for you.

But the key to all of this work and this will feel counterintuitive, especially to an Autism mom who is so laser-focused on finding more resources for her child, on focusing all of her efforts on her child. So instead of doing that, you are going to take all of your detective skills that you are using on your child, all the planning, preparation and previewing that you do for your

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child, all of the strategies for self-regulation and self-soothing, you are going to turn those inward and I'm going to teach you how.

The focus is on you and guess what, if you just take 10% of the time that you spend focusing on your child and focus this inward you will see significant results. I promise you, by focusing on yourself you will tap into the most power and the most influence that you have to support your child. Because ultimately and you know this, you can't control them but you can influence them and you can support them. And that is huge. And the best way to do this is from your most regulated self. Sound good?

Alright, so I want you to go to my website right now and sign up for the course. And if you have a friend, if you have a group of friends I want you to share this link with them. I want you to post this on your Facebook pages. I want you to tell every mom you know with a kid with Autism, or a mom who is struggling with behavioral issues or anything like that, send this to her. It will help her, it will help you. Okay, I will see you inside, thanks so much 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.