

Ep #51: Permission Slips 2.0



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With Your Host

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You are listening to episode 51 of *The Autism Mom Coach*, Permission Slips 2.0.

In last week's episode we talked about how it is up to us to give ourselves permission to do things to take care of ourselves, no one else will do it. The 2.0 version of Permission Slips though is to give ourselves permission to take time for ourselves and to actually enjoy that time without guiltting ourselves about taking it in the first place. Stay tuned to learn how.

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 this week's episode of the podcast. I hope that you are doing well. So today we are going to talk about permission slips, the 2.0 version. But first I wanted to give a shout out to my client, Amanda, who was the inspiration for these two episodes. And specifically we were coaching one day and she came to the coaching call looking just a little bit stressed. And the thing she was stressed about was that she didn't have anything on her to-do list.

Amanda is a very busy mom of two kids, one with special needs but she's also a business owner, a nonprofit founder and lots of other things to add to that. So she always has a pretty busy to-do list but this day she didn't and she was struggling. She was actually kind of stumped and so as we dug into it, as we dug into why she wasn't willing to take the day to really enjoy herself, the words came out of her mouth and that was, "I need to give myself permission." And so she did. And as it so often happens, permission slips then became the theme of that week's coaching calls.

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Other clients were struggling with the same exact issue so I encouraged them to do what Amanda did and give themselves permission. And here is what happened, they either gave themselves permission to do the thing they wanted to do and felt miserable about it the whole time because they were telling themselves that they should be with their child or they resisted giving themselves permission to do it in the first place because again they told themselves, I should be with my child.

So I want to walk you through these two examples and the coaching that I gave. Client one recently gave herself permission to skip attending her child's Thursday night swim lesson so that she could go to a fitness class or meet friends out for dinner. She told herself that this was okay since she attended almost all of her child's therapies and extracurricular activities. And that it would be nice for her child and her husband to have this time together. So far so good.

The problem. She struggled to enjoy the time that she had created for herself because while she was on the yoga mat or out to dinner with friends she was pestered with the thought, I should be with my child. This thought nagged at her to the point where she questioned whether having time to herself was even worth it.

Client number two is a special education teacher. She wakes up, readies her two children for school including her child with Autism and then she goes to work and spends the next seven hours supporting children with challenging behaviors. Gets in her car to go home, travels in rush hour traffic, walks in the door and boom she is on again. So we talked about how she could find 10 minutes for herself before walking in the door so that she could help herself transition from work to home.

And this was possible. Her mother was taking care of the kids, the 10 extra minutes were not a problem there and there was really no concern over her children's wellbeing but she still told herself I should be with my kids. So this one thought was standing in her way of just taking 10 minutes for herself to transition herself from a very busy work life to a pretty busy home life.

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So here's the coaching that I gave to both clients. First we started by normalizing their thoughts and feelings. It is not unusual at all for mothers, especially working mothers to believe that we should be all things and feel all of the guilt when we are not with our children. It is not because we have done anything wrong or that we are not entitled to time. It is because we live in a society that glorifies the mom on the edge of a nervous breakdown over the mother who makes time for herself.

So it is no accident that you think that it's your responsibility to devote yourself completely to your child even at your own expense, in fact it's quite normal. Not because it's the truth of the universe but because it's in the air that we breathe.

Second, we talked about decisions ahead of time. If the thought, I should always be with my child or I need to be with my child is one that you regularly have and you anticipate that you will have it when you take time for yourself. You don't have to wait to be on the yoga mat or out to dinner to decide ahead of time how you want to think on purpose about your decision to make time for yourself. The thought, I should always be with my kid is just that, it's a thought. It means it's optional, you don't have to think it.

You can question that thought, is that really true, is that how you want to operate that you should always be with your kid? I mean think about that, I should always be with my child. Whenever I have a waking minute and I'm not doing something else I should be with my child. What's the evidence for why that's not true at all? How is that really helpful to you or your child? Could there be another way? Is it possible, even possible that 10 minutes for you is just fine?

And then finally, whether you believe that thought is true or not, ask yourself is it useful, is it helping you to take the time that you need to regulate yourself and to transition yourself so that you can show up for your child in the best way possible? Or is it weighing you down with guilt and leaving you drained and feeling burnt out?

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Finally and most importantly, you can decide ahead of time about any decision that you make to have your own back. We always get to decide how we are going to treat ourselves about the decisions we make. We can decide to support ourselves or second guess ourselves with I told you so's or maybe that was the wrong decision. The former helps us build a relationship of trust with ourselves and the latter always has us second guessing ourselves and fearing our own reprimands.

We always get to choose even if you make a decision that you would not make a second time you still get to decide how you treat yourself about that and that includes your decision to take time for yourself and that includes the decisions that you make to take time for yourself. You get to decide ahead of time how you want to think about that decision and to have your own back.

So when the default thoughts come up of I should be with my child instead of giving in to them, instead of thinking it must be true, it's the truth of the universe you can decide how you want to relate to those thoughts before they even happen so that when they do it's not really a big deal. And that way you can enjoy the precious few moments that you actually do make for yourself so that when you do return to your child you're feeling maybe a little bit more refreshed, a little less on edge and that all matters a lot.

So there you have it, Permission Slips 2.0. It's not just making and taking the time for yourself, it is deciding how you are going to treat yourself and how you're going to allow yourself to enjoy the time that you do have so that you can refresh and replenish yourself. That's it for this week. 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.