

Ep #63: Moms Like Us: Interview with Cindy Decker



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Lisa Candra

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You are listening to episode 63 of *The Autism Mom Coach*. Moms Like Us: Interview with Cindy Decker.

Welcome to *The Autism Mom Coach* podcast, I am your host, Lisa Candra. I am a lawyer, a life coach, and most importantly, I am the full-time single mother of a teenager with Autism and other comorbid diagnoses. I know what it is like to wonder if you are doing enough or the right things for your child and to live in fear of their future.

I also know that constantly fueling yourself with fear and anxiety is not sustainable for you or of any benefit to your child. That is why in this podcast I will share practical strategies and tools you can use to shift from a chronic state of fight, flight to some calm and ease. You are your child's greatest resource, let's take care of you.

Hello everyone. We are going to end Autism Awareness Month with my conversation with Cindy Decker. Cindy is a former client and now lifelong friend who I had the privilege of coaching for six months. Cindy came to our coaching relationship at her self-described rock bottom following the pandemic. And in this episode she shares the three things she learned and implemented from our time coaching together and how these three things have changed the way she shows up as an Autism parent.

Cindy is a great example of how investing in your own wellness not only impacts you, it impacts your child, your family, and your community. Now that Cindy is not spending her precious time spinning in worry and catastrophizing, she has made room for more joy and the very important work of advocating for her child and other children through a state-wide advocacy program that she will tell you about. With that, let's talk to Cindy.

Lisa: Cindy, welcome to the podcast. I am so excited to have you here and I'm so happy for my listeners to hear from you and to learn about your experiences. Please introduce yourself and tell the audience about your Autism journey.

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Cindy: Thanks, Lisa. I appreciate you having me on the podcast. My name is Cindy Decker. I started my Autism journey with my youngest son. I have three sons, let me start with that. I have a 21 year old in college. I have an 18 year old headed to college, so is neurotypical. And then we have an 11 year old who is on the Autism spectrum. He was diagnosed at age four so we are on the seventh year of this journey. And honestly, when we started with Liam, we noticed challenges from the beginning.

I had two other children so we noticed things just when he was little, sensory issues and just how he behaved in public and struggles that he had when we were at his brothers' football games and events at school, daycare. So we went through eight different daycares before the age of three.

Lisa: Wow.

Cindy: Yeah, we went through eight different daycares before he turned three. And so we knew there was something going on but we just had not enough knowledge and because he's the youngest we were often told, "Well, he's the baby, his brothers are speaking for him. Mom is speaking for him. He's your baby so you're babying him." And so we went through that until finally at aged three we found a pediatrician who would actually listen. And immediately he said, I very clearly remember that day we sat in his office for a 15 minute evaluation to get a referral.

And Liam was climbing over me and turning on and off the light. And he said, "Don't be afraid when they tell you it's autism." And I had gone in for an ADHD diagnosis.

Lisa: That's not what I came for.

Cindy: That was not, what do you mean, don't be afraid? What are you talking about? So we did, we went for the evaluation, got through the evaluation. That evaluation sent us to a neurologist. And the neurologist said, "Okay, we're going to go through the Autism diagnosis." And I was like, "Yeah, you know, I don't think so." And so I put him off for a year. And

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at age four we went back for a follow-up with him and he was like, “So about that test that you’ve canceled twice, we need to do a diagnosis. You need to be able to get him the right services at school.”

At that point we only had the ADHD diagnosis. And he said, “Miss Decker, why don’t you want to do the test? Why have you canceled it twice?” And I said, “I just don’t know. I don’t see Autism. I’ve seen it from what I’ve seen on TV.” And he very gently chuckled at me and very gently said, “Well, we’re going to do the test and let’s see where it goes.” And so that’s what we did, we did the AdAS and it came back with an Autism diagnosis. And that’s when we went back to the school.

He was already getting services at that point, Liam was already at that point in preschool and the preschool special needs program at school. And we were still seeing struggles. So we went back to the school before he started kindergarten. And we had an Autism diagnosis, let’s walk through kindergarten fully aware of what we’re needing. And that’s when our battle with the school started. Because at that point Liam had words. He wasn’t super communicative and he didn’t have, he had a speech delay. We knew he had a language processing disorder.

That’s when the school pushed back and said, “Well, he’s not Autistic. We’re not giving the Autism diagnosis in school.” Because in school that meant 11 other services that comes with Autism. In Texas there’s an Autism Texas supplement. And so they’re like, “He’s got the services, we’re going to give him what he needs. We’re going to put in a generic classroom. He’s going to share an aid with five other students and we’re going to be fine.” And so our school journey began with that.

Lisa: Wow. So just take us back to when you eventually did get the AdAS completed and it came back indicating an Autism diagnosis. Did you believe it or what was your reaction to it at that point?

Cindy: It’s funny looking back to it because we had, here in Houston we had a little hurricane called Harvey. That was the worst flood that Houston had ever seen. We did not directly get affected. We couldn’t leave our

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house for a week but we did not get flooded thankfully. But everybody around us had gotten flooded, and even getting to, they did the testing and we went back a week after the hurricane to get the result. It took us two hours to get to the doctor. There was still areas underwater. We still couldn't get there.

The diagnostician, we waited in the office for two hours because the diagnostician couldn't get to the office to give us the result. So the physician's assistant had to come in and give us the diagnosis. So I think by the time she walked in to read us the result, we were so numb from what had just happened that week and what it had taken to get there. And the two hours that we had waited in the office, that honestly, she just read it and I was numb. It was almost like listening to somebody else talking. And I could hear her words but they just weren't sinking in.

At that point it was like, okay, give me the paperwork. I'll call the school. In my head I was in action mode, let's get something done, I'm not listening. So I didn't let it sink in. I think under different circumstances I probably would have felt it more. But I literally just grabbed the paper, walked out the door and called the school on the way home in the car. So let's get wheels in motion, I have an answer, let's get going. And it took a good probably a good year, maybe even several years, Lisa, for it to really sink in on what we were up against and what that meant.

And we went through a really rough patch soon after that where it really sank in of, okay, my child is on the Autism spectrum, this is what it means. This is a lifelong thing. This isn't just about getting him the services at school, it's how am I going to help him in life. And it just threw me, once it hit probably a year or two years later it really sent me into a path that's actually how I got to you. Because at that point I was so worn and so just done and kind of depression over it. It just sank in later.

It didn't sink in as they were reading it to me. I was hearing it but it was almost like an out of body experience but I think it was all the events leading up to that day that made it harder.

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Lisa: Yeah, I totally remember the diagnosis and the out of body experience, thinking, they're just going to tell me it's a speech delay. And then they say, "Autism." But I'm like, okay, that's fine because Autism needs services. This was in my brain at the time. But then the doctor took me aside and gave me a pamphlet and she said, "I know he's your first child, I don't know if you're thinking about having more children." And then she gave me some sort of statistic about the indications in other children.

And I just remember feeling like time had stopped, I could not process anything at that point because it was like, you've diagnosed my child and now you're diagnosing prospective children as well and anyhow. But I also like you, went into the go, go, go mode of doing as much as possible as fast as possible. And I think that that is so common for so many of us. And there comes a point where we look up and we're just like, how did we get here? Feeling so overwhelmed, not even recognizing ourselves or our lives.

Cindy: Yeah, that is exactly how that went. It was suddenly here I am and now what do I do? It's not just about having the paperwork and having the answer, is this is going to be a lifetime of how do we help him and give him the right services for life?

Lisa: Yeah, absolutely. Well, Cindy, it's so hard for me to believe that it is almost three years since we first met. Can you share a bit about how you found me and why you decided to reach out for coaching?

Cindy: Yeah. So yeah, we were in the middle of the pandemic. At this point Liam had been in a self-contained classroom. Let's see, he was put into a self-contained classroom in first grade. And mind you, this was our third elementary school, so remember, eight daycares, third elementary school. By age eight he had hit his third elementary school. And so the pandemic hit and we had been in this self-contained classroom for a little over nine months and then the world blew up. So by that fall he was back in school.

When the pandemic hit in March he went back to school probably about September, but I was at my lowest point. I'm a full-time working mom. I am

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an executive with a company. And my older children were at that time, Ethan, he was a senior year, the pandemic hit on his senior year. And then I had a freshman in high school. So working through how do you deal with a senior year pandemic when your child is now missing prom and senior pictures and graduations. And all that goes with that spring.

And luckily he had finished his football season intact, but still, going through that senior spring and then a freshman in high school going through the pandemic at the same time that Liam had been out of school. And I was probably at my lowest point. And I saw you comment I think on a post on [inaudible], that's how I found you. I saw you make a comment, I'm like, "That's a really smart thing to say." And so I kind of Googled you and found you. And through finding you I connected with you."

And I know you remember this but when I connected with you, you set up a call with me. And I had Josh sit with me because I knew that my husband, although very supportive, was going to struggle with, "Well, you're going to see a coach but you're not going to see a therapist."

Lisa: What's this all about?

Cindy: Yeah. Why are you doing that? Go call a therapist. And I knew I needed something. I knew I needed one or the other, I just didn't know what your coaching was about and so I called you first.

Lisa: I'm so glad.

Cindy: Yeah, me too. I remember we sat at the kitchen table and listened. And we talked through. We told you everything that was going on and walked through the process and your coaching model and what you do and how you work with people. And when the call was over, Josh was like, "Well?" I'm like, "I have to do this." I said, "You don't understand, I have to do this. If it's six months, if it's six weeks, I have to do this." I said, "And I really liked Lisa." I could relate to you.

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There was so many times where we're in this world in Autism where we don't 100% fit in all the time. We have that child who is considered high functioning, who can speak but doesn't communicate. And we're working moms, so we're trying to hold down this full-time job at a high executive level and trying to just keep it all in balance. I thought, I need somebody who understands that. I can't just find a therapist who does all of that. And I knew you did all of them.

Lisa: Yeah, I so remember our intake call so well, especially you and Josh sitting side by side at the table. And I was really struck by how similar the experiences we were having, just at different timeframes. Our sons are a few years apart but they are both what is considered high functioning mostly I think because they can speak but that's not really our experience of them. Can you talk a little bit about that as it pertains to Liam?

Cindy: Yeah. So like you said, they can speak and Liam is a very chatty person. And part of the reason why I didn't understand why we wanted to do an Autism diagnosis is Liam is also social. He wants to fit in. He's just socially awkward. The things that come out of his mouth, we laugh now but there was times when we just wanted to crawl under the table for the way he would just tell somebody. And it's like you said, it's that high functioning until he's just not functioning.

And when he's not functioning it can be destructive. It can be hurtful because he's just going through the emotions of getting out what he wants to say in a setting that is just, it doesn't fit in with what he needs at the moment. So it's a really hard thing when I feel like in the Autism spectrum, when you can speak but you can't say what you want to say. That communication is just not coming out right. Or you're feeling the emotion, for Liam it's a lot of the emotion. When he gets embarrassed it immediately makes him mad because he doesn't understand what the embarrassment is.

Or if he's sad he doesn't want to feel sad so then he fights against it with anger. And so understanding his emotions was a really big part of it. And like you said, I think that's where you and I really bonded, because like

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Ben, a lot of the things that I tell you, he does this. You're like, "Ben did that and this is what we [crosstalk]. So it was finding that person that understood. And he may communicate with you but he loves curse words.

Lisa: Who doesn't?

Cindy: Right. And in that moment, I'll even give you an example, this was hilarious. So a couple of weeks ago, Liam does go to a therapist and we were leaving the therapist's, "So we're going to go to dinner. Daddy's going to meet us at dinner." And it was a restaurant we hadn't been to before which was going to be hard for us but we thought we'd try. And we walk in and as you walk in the restaurant, it's a really small restaurant and the bar's right there and it's happy hour and it was loud and people were laughing and having a happy hour.

And Liam immediately walked in and yelled out a curse word and it was like the needle scratch on the record player. The whole restaurant was silent. It was like, "Okay, we're here."

Lisa: We've arrived.

Cindy: We've arrived, can I have a table now, please? So that's what high functioning, where everybody is like, "Well, he can communicate so well." And the key is he can speak really well, he can't always communicate really well.

Lisa: Yeah. I have such a similar experience with Ben especially around the emotions. If he feels shame or embarrassment or that he's being called out for something, his reaction to that can be really severe because I think for him, he experienced it that physically, it's such an intense emotion and then he's also fighting it as well.

Cindy: Exactly. That's exactly how it goes. It's a physical, yeah, their emotions are physical I think for them more than anything.

Lisa: Yeah. I mean I think about everything else that they experience, turned up to a 10 and so all the sensory issues and things like that, if that

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also goes for the emotions that they are feeling, that it's just such an intense feeling. I mean I know for me when I feel certain emotions like fear or worry, I want to get away from them as well. And so just maybe not really understanding what's happening and then they're reacting to it as well.

Cindy: Agree.

Lisa: Cindy, we worked together for six months. Can you tell us what your biggest takeaways or lessons learned were from our time together?

Cindy: Oh gosh, I have so many. I think we started our session and one of the first things that you taught me is that it's not personal. Everything Liam did I took personally. If he reacted a certain way it's because I wasn't a good enough mom or because I taught him wrong or because I didn't do something. So that was probably my biggest one. And then I would probably say the other two that I learned from you was catastrophizing. I still do it, don't get me wrong, we still have moments. We've had a rough couple of weeks at school lately.

And immediately I'm like, "The world's ending. We're going to have to leave school forever." And so I still do it but I catch myself doing it now. It's okay, pause, take a breath. What are you thinking? Why are you reacting this way? So I kind of walk myself through your process. And just the fact too, my third big learning from you was I am the expert. I would always, my biggest answer to things especially with school was why are they doing this? They know better, and I told them this is an issue for Liam. If they're the expert, why can't they fix it? And learning that I'm the expert. I know him.

Somebody else I think recently and I can't think of who it was so I'm sorry if I'm not giving credit to the right person but they said that they were the only fixed set person in their IEP meetings every year. Everybody on the team at some point or another, shifts changes, moods changes. You're the one fixed person in the IEP meeting year after year after year. And so you had also taught me, I'm the expert and that's why. I'm the one who's there

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every year and I've been through the three different elementary schools, now four because we moved last July.

I'm the one who went through the eight different daycares and the different ABA therapist and the different speech therapist. And so I'm the one who's seen his reaction and his world evolve. So now I know I'm the expert. So when somebody says, "Well, we're doing this and it's not working." I don't go, "Well, you're the expert, fix it." I go, "Well, here's what I've tried at home, let's try this. Or how does this work? What if you do this? Or this is what I see from this situation."

And it has made me a much better partner I think in IEP meetings with the team because I've been able to work with them, not expecting them to come up with a solution.

Lisa: Wow, that's so powerful. I remember, we spent a lot of time on the expert. And you're like, "Well, they have training." I'm like, "Well, how much training do you think they actually have compared to your 11 years of 24 hour training?" Not to dismiss training and being a professional but when you are living this every day and over time periods and you are the constant, we really are the expert. We of course benefit from bringing other people onto the team and relying on them and conferring with them.

But I think it's such a mistake for us to believe, well, we're just the mom. We're so much more than that.

Cindy: Right, yeah, just understanding that. I think that was probably my biggest eye opener after the it's not personal, stop taking things personally. But yeah, just understanding that, yes, I was not trained in occupational therapy. No, I was not trained as a psychologist or a psychiatrist or a [inaudible] of any kind. I'm not an educator, I'm an economist by trade, but understanding that I've seen in motion what works for Liam. And I can see when he's dysregulated, I can see it in his face. I can see it 30 minutes before the meltdown will happen. Oh, oh, we're in trouble.

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I've got to right this train or we're going to derail here in a minute. And so learning that, knowing that I can see it coming and explaining that to people of, "Here's some signs that you can look for. Here's what might cause this." Or we had a challenge at school last week and immediately I sent a note to the school, "Well, here's what I think happened. Here's what I see. So just a heads up, you didn't see it but this is probably what led to it." Our kiddos have these challenges, it's not just because they want to.

And when you and I met I would get a lot of, "Well, he's attention seeking." And that I took personal. When people tell me he's doing things, attention seeking, I was like, "Well, he's not just a brat who's trying to get your attention." And now I've realized that he's attention seeking because he's trying to get your reaction or your emotions going because he's trying to communicate something to you. So yes, it is attention seeking but not in, I'm a brat, I raised him the wrong way. It's attention seeking in that he's trying to communicate something to get your attention to help him move on.

And I think working with you for those six months helped me see the difference between the, you're a brat, attention seeking versus you're attention seeking to communicate something to help him move on. That to me was the biggest breakthrough that I had.

Lisa: Yeah, I think that that is such an important piece because what I say about behaviors is that when we take it personally we make it personal. So you make it about your child, he's a brat. You make it about yourself, you're not a good enough mother, you're too permissive. You make it about your parenting and all of that just serves to escalate your stress, undermine your self-confidence as a parent. And neither of those serves you or your child. And so that reframe for me has been so big.

And even with my clients who are like, "No, well, it's personal because he said, "I hate you", to me." And it's like, well, okay, let's just say it is personal. If that was an actual truth that we can have and we can't, is it helpful to think that? Because it's not because it just makes you more aggravated at them, more aggravated at yourself. And so it's like we're reframing these things for ourselves is just to notice, how are we showing

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up when we're believing it's personal? And how is that impacting us? Because that's the piece that we can change before we get to trying to change our kid.

Because we're all trying to do that in some way. We think if they just did or do this, then I would feel better. And we really need to do the work to support ourselves because try as we might we can't control these little guys or big guys as they do become as they grow. So, Cindy, it's been about two years since our coaching relationship ended, although our friendship is going strong. Can you share how you can continue to use what you learned during our six months in your day-to-day life?

Cindy: So I still, these three things I think are the three that I use every single day. When I get that call from school and my whole body tenses up and immediately I'm like, "This is it. This is the call that gets him out of school." I've stopped doing that. I'll see the calls come in and be like, "Hi, what's going on?" Now, it does help that the school immediately calls and says, "There's nothing, he just forgot his snack."

Lisa: When they call me, they're like, "Hi, how are you doing?" I'm like, "No small talk, let's get right to it."

Cindy: They immediately start with, "Hi, it's Suzie Q and there's nothing wrong." But I use that, to answer the phone, I calm myself first and say, "He just needs a snack, it's okay." When that situation happens at home where he's dysregulated and struggling at the moment, the not taking it personal, I just reiterate that to myself every day. It's not personal. I am the expert. I know better. So that I won't start madly Googling the resolution to a problem that we've already been through. I've already done it.

As they get older, to me it's the same problems. They're just a little bit bigger because the emotions are bigger. So it doesn't make it easier but it does in some way because we've been through it. And so that's how I think you've helped me is that every day I'm constantly [inaudible] that wasn't personal. And I'll just repeat these phrases, it's not personal, pause, think. Okay, think through it so that you can think, what are you thinking, how am

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I thinking it before I react to it. And I'm not perfect at it by any stretch, but that has really helped me over the last few years.

Just continuously I guess, practicing that pause and thinking, okay, what am I thinking, what really happened and how am I going to react to it, that's not going to set him off. I'm on a much even keel with him. I might say to my husband however, because although he listened to all of our coaching calls [inaudible]. But that's how it has helped me, it really just, okay, how am I going to stay even keel for this and not react to drive his reaction or elevate him to the next level.

Lisa: Yeah. No, that makes so much sense. And part of what you're saying is practicing those thoughts, one of the things that I teach in my coaching program that I taught you, it's not enough just to say, it's not personal like a mantra. Because if you don't believe it and it doesn't feel differently in your body, it's just words that you're saying that are meaningless to you. But we coached for so long on it that that shift became real for you. You do believe that it's not personal. And when you believe that, it feels differently than feeling like it is or he's doing it on purpose or you're a bad mom.

And it's that combination of believing that thought and having that emotional shift that enables you to show up in the way that you want to, which is such an important thing.

Cindy: Yeah, that is not personal, it carries in so many ways throughout this because like I said, people will tell you, "Well, he's attention seeking." And immediately that's personal. And so working through that and how I'm thinking about it and what I'm thinking about it, when I hear it is how do I help him get through that emotion and through that attention seeking moment to, again, go through it without further emotions or further escalation? And that was a hard one for us I think when you and I started working together.

I just think it immediately, okay, stop on your thought, get out of your mindset and figure out to help him through this and not just get upset over it, if that helps.

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Lisa: Okay. Cindy, I want to shift a bit to what has opened up for you in terms of your capacity and your mental space now that you are not constantly beating yourself up, second guessing yourself and taking Liam's behaviors, personally. As I recall, midway through our work you got involved in some very important policy work, can you tell us about that?

Cindy: Yeah. So being able to understand my emotions and how I was working through the emotions as Liam was going through his emotions really helped me first of all give myself some space. I was able to get my health back in check. I was able to get back to working out, find the right nutrition plan form that worked at the time. And those were all things that I had let go of. I also have been able to, I took a class, so I joined an organization here in Texas and they're all over the country, some states have it, some states don't, but it's called Partners in Policymaking.

And so I signed up for the Partners in Policymaking class and went through six months of learning about policy and bills and writing bills and understanding how to speak to our politicians. And so I was able to do all of that and then get involved with my state representative. And here are some bills that are important to me. Here are some things that it's important for our kids, not just in education but in the community that should happen within this state.

And actually just recently about three weeks ago, I was able to go to the state capital and testify in front of a committee for safety regulations within the school for our kids when they're struggling or having a meltdown against physical restraint in Texas. And so being able to understand that I am the expert and understanding that it's not my fault, it's not about me, it's about them and how we help them, helped me to realize how could I testify in front of the capital. That yes, my child is struggling and when dysregulated can have just physical reactions to things.

But how can we as a country, as a state, as a community, help them with these things and putting the safety regulations in place so that they can self-regulate without a restraint. And so that really has helped me become a better advocate I think at a different level than just being the mom. And

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work again, meeting with state representatives and meeting with state senators on, “Hey guys, here are some of the shortfalls that we have in the state that we really need to fix.”

And I’ve learned now as the expert that I can speak about it without thinking, I don’t know, I’m not the expert because I didn’t study that. I can actually speak to it because I am the expert, I’ve done it with my son. Here’s my story and this is how we can help him.

Lisa: That’s so powerful. And the fact that you are currently raising your child, raising three children but currently raising Liam and have a big fancy pants job with lots of responsibilities. And then doing that work is just really amazing and so fortunate to have a mom like you with your experience to be in that position. Because I think it takes a really unique person to not just speak out for their own child but then to speak out for all children. It’s at a higher level and it’s just amazing that you’re doing that.

Cindy: Thank you. I’m pretty proud of what we’ve accomplished so far. And there’s a lot to do. Texas is a big state. But I think there’s so much that we can do as the experts and as the parents who see this firsthand. It’s funny, when I went to speak at congress last week and I gave my testimony, the committee chair actually grabbed me afterwards and was like, “I learned so much from you.” And there was people testifying who are experts, the head of The Autism Society and the head of this organization and all these things.

And she said, “I have learned a lot from you because you gave us firsthand knowledge of what you’ve been through.” And I thought, well, this is [33:08] is all about. I am not the head of the work solutions organization but here I am telling you what we have experienced.

Lisa: Well, it’s funny and I did a podcast episode about this just to sort of lighten it up, What Is An Expert and this was really inspired by you because you were really insistent with me, “These people went to four years of education or maybe eight years of education. And well, what makes

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someone an expert? Is it because they took classes? Is it because they had a couple of different experiences in different settings?"

And the example that I used in the podcast episode was from my cousin Vinny where [inaudible] Mona Lisa to be an expert because she worked in her dad's mechanic shop and so she knew the hum of every car, whatever it was. But that's the point, you don't have to have the formal education to be an expert in something. So, Cindy, this work is all really incredible and I'm sure there are people who are interested in learning more about it. So if they wanted to do that, how would they find you and to learn more?

Cindy: So you can always reach out to me @autismwithyourshirtoff. I have that on Instagram and on Facebook, just send me a DM and I can answer any questions you have and I'll respond.

Lisa: Well, thank you so much for joining the podcast. I know that people really benefited from your experiences and from the stories that you had to share. I will just ask you for the parent who just got the diagnosis or their child just got kicked out of their first or second daycare or their first or second elementary school, what advice would you give to that parent?

Cindy: I would say, don't take it personal. It's not personal. Education is such a tricky subject. It's so cookie cutter per se that when they get a child who has a disability or is on the Autism spectrum and it's hard for them to fit into that, it's like that round hole fitting into the square peg or vice versa. So I would just say, take a minute, find Lisa, because you really, really helped me, exactly those three things. I can't even tell you enough how much it helped me to really stop and think about why I'm the expert, how I know what I know is going to help the school system.

But take a moment and find your resource, there are so many ways, listening to your podcast. I listen to your podcast all the time. And I'll text you, "Hey, I love this, what do you think of that?" So I think, just finding those resources first and foremost. But stopping for a minute as a parent of a newly diagnosed child and not taking it personally and just regrouping. Figuring out, okay, how can I help my child through the school system?

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Because again you're the expert so you can help them in understanding what your child needs better.

Lisa: Yeah, I think that's so right on. Alright, well, that is all. Is there anything else, questions that I haven't asked you or anything else that you want to say before we wrap up?

Cindy: No, I don't think so. But thank you, thank you for having me on here. I treasure your friendship and our relationship when it started was really what I needed to kind of get out of the hole that I was in. So the coaching has definitely helped me and has worked wonders within our household.

Lisa: Well, I'm so glad to hear that. I guess on that note, would you recommend coaching with me?

Cindy: Absolutely I would recommend coaching with you. I recommend it all the time.

Lisa: Well, I so appreciate that and I really appreciate all the details that you gave about your experience because I think that so many people can relate to that, especially the taking it personally with our kids who are a little bit more higher functioning who can say things to us that aren't the nicest. And especially when it comes to other things too like no property destruction. I remember your favorite lamp or there was a favorite pillow that we talked about at some point. And it's hard to separate that. So it really does take practice.

And I think also when you're talking to somebody else, you're telling them and they're now going, "Oh my God, I can't believe that." And they're like, "Yeah, I've been there." It takes it down a notch.

Cindy: Yeah, it does, it really helps. And it's funny, sometimes on that personal piece, I have that lamp, it sits on my desk as a reminder that it's not personal, the lamp survived, we survived. It still comes on as broken as it is. So sometimes I really just need to leave the broken lamp out there to remind yourself it wasn't about you. It wasn't even about the lamp.

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Lisa: Well, Cindy, again, thank you so much for coming on. I'm sure this has been so helpful for so many people and I cannot wait to see you in just two weeks, we will be together at the Coop's Troops Retreat.

Cindy: I know, I'm excited, I can't wait. I'll give you a big hug.

Lisa: I can't wait. Alright, well, thanks again.

Cindy: Thanks, Lisa, I appreciate it.

Alright, thank you so much for listening. I hope you got tons of value out of Cindy's story, and just know, Cindy is not a unicorn and neither am I or any of my clients. This is all possible for you too. To learn more about my coaching program and how I can help you change your parenting experience, schedule a consultation. The link will be in the episode notes and you can always just go right to my website and do it from there. Alright, 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.