

## Ep #88: Stop Beating Yourself Up



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Lisa Candra

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You are listening to episode 88 of *The Autism Mom Coach*, The Second Arrow.

Today we are going to talk about our own brand of self-injurious behavior, the kind of injury that occurs when we double down on our own pain and create suffering for ourselves. Stay tuned.

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 and welcome to the podcast. I hope you are all doing well. On to today's topic, which is a regular topic in my coaching calls with clients and that is self-inflicted emotional pain. We do this a lot not because we are sadist, but because we are human and it seems to be a thing that we do. Something happens, we feel a painful emotion like anger or resentment or jealousy. And then we double down on ourselves by telling ourselves that we should not feel the way that we feel. We guilt ourselves, we shame ourselves, we scold ourselves. That's what's called self-inflicted emotional pain.

I want to further demonstrate this to you by talking about the second arrow. The parable of the second arrow is a well-known Buddhist story about dealing with suffering more skillfully. It is said that the Buddha once asked a student, "If a person is struck by an arrow, is it painful? If a person is struck by a second arrow is it even more painful?" He went on to explain, "In life, we can't always control the first arrow. However, the second arrow is our reaction to the first. The second arrow is always optional."

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So what does this mean for you as an Autism mom? Well, think about all of the thoughts and the feelings that you have on any given day about Autism, about your child, about other people, maybe you feel anger about your child's diagnosis. Maybe you are frustrated by how far behind they are from their typical peers. Maybe you are jealous of your best friend for her neurotypical children and seemingly normal life.

Maybe you are disappointed over the loss of your own expectations about what you thought parenting would be like. Or maybe you're disappointed over the experiences that you thought your child would have, you thought that they would enjoy and that you thought you would enjoy with them. All of these emotions are painful. They are the first arrow, the unavoidable pain we experience in life.

And this simply happens when we're having thoughts about our circumstances and these thoughts create emotions like fear, disappointment, jealousy, and sadness. This is all normal. This is part of the human experience. But what happens is we take it a step further by judging ourselves for our emotions in the first place, by telling ourselves that we shouldn't feel that way and by guiltting ourselves. We shouldn't feel jealous of other people. We should be happy with the child that we have. To feel this way is somehow a betrayal of our child. We are not a good parent, and on and on.

So what happens when we do this, when we go from the initial arrow of feeling the pain of the fear, the anger, the judgment. We amplify the original pain and instead of processing it and letting it go, we become wrapped up in it. The focus then goes from the normal pain of being a human to how bad of a human we are for having the thoughts and emotions in the first place. All of this creates suffering and all of this is avoidable. But maybe you think that shaming and judging yourself is useful. Maybe you think it's a way of cleansing yourself of an unsavory thought or an emotion.

Maybe you think a proper browbeating is a way of atoning for your thoughts and emotions. I know I used to unconsciously subscribe to this. I would guilt myself, I would shame myself and I believed that if I did this enough

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that I would be better and that I wouldn't have these thoughts and that I should be punished for even thinking these things. But unfortunately, that's not how guilt and shame work. They don't make us better. They make us feel smaller. They create more suffering.

The good news is that this is all totally optional. You can stop it right now, but to do so you need to first recognize you're doing it in the first place. And then make the conscious decision to pause and redirect your brain from indulging in the playlist of thoughts that has you shaming, blaming, and guiltning yourself.

To do that I am going to share with you three simple steps and I'm going to use the acronym SAD. S stands for see the first arrow. When you are feeling pain over something that's happened, a feeling of fear, anger, jealousy, whatever it is comes up, notice it.

And then A, allow yourself to feel and process the pain of the first arrow without judgment. You can simply do this by acknowledging this is a painful thought. This is a painful emotion and don't judge yourself. Hold yourself with self-compassion.

And then D, decline additional arrows. Your pattern is to double down on yourself and so you're going to have to get really good at pausing and redirecting and declining these additional arrows. This is not part of the process that you have to do. This is part of the pattern that you've been doing that's been creating suffering and misery for you. So in this moment, you have the decision to say no to the additional arrows.

Alright, that is it for today's episode, short and sweet, but an important concept to keep in mind because this is something that we do and we do it automatically. And the more you can let up on inflicting additional pain and additional suffering on yourself, the more capacity you will have to manage and to process the emotions that you're experiencing without getting wrapped into them. This is the difference between having an emotion and staying stuck in it. Alright, thank you so much for listening. I will talk to you next week.

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Thanks for listening to The Autism Mom Coach. If you are ready to apply the principles you are learning in these episodes to your life, it is time to schedule a consultation call with me. Podcasts are great but the ahas are fleeting. Real change comes from application and implementation and this is exactly what we do in my one-on-one coaching program. To schedule your consultation, go to my website, [theautismmomcoach.com](http://theautismmomcoach.com), Work With Me and take the first step to taking better care of yourself so that you can show up as the parent you want to be for your child with Autism.