

How to Have Great Experiences by Preparing Your Kids for New Adventures

Good morning, welcome to ***Sunday Snacks with Sam and Ellie***. Today. We're going to talk about preparing for adventures because last week we talked about how "18 is not a magical number" for kids to like suddenly know everything.

Right, right. Because I don't think at 18 I knew everything and I still don't think I know everything at 40...

Ellie: ... or even 77.

Sam: Exactly. So it's like, I think 18 year olds is pretty Farfetched. Yeah. That seems a little absurd. So how do we really prepare them for adventures in life and do the fun things? I mean, honestly, one of the biggest ways that I can see to do that is give them practical experiences, practical experiences including things like going to scouting events.

Maybe you're not the most outdoorsy kind of person and you don't really like camping. Well, if your kid is really into that kind of stuff and survivalist training and such, letting that kid be a scout is a perfect opportunity.

You were explaining about why would I need to learn knots - well in a life and death situation, knots and rope can save your life. Maybe I would not be the person to come to on that one ever. Let me just tell you that right now. But I do know people in our scouting program who are absolutely amazing at knots and they give the kids a very practical use for it.

So, our concept here today that we wanted to really talk to you about is practical application and how it is crucial for kids. But also giving them the literal reason and valid proof of how you would use that in the real world.

Because, think about it, math is really beneficial for us on so many levels, but how often do you use Advanced Calculus as an average individual? Right. How often do I use Algebra II concepts on a day to day basis? I don't, but I know how to balance my checkbook.

Yes. I know I can give a tip to a delivery person and make sure that they're adequately compensated for their time and energy, measurements for cooking.

All of these are applicable math skills and, and they can be a massive adventure, like for little children. That's why we have programs out there like *Radish* and all these other different boxes that you can get - subscription boxes.

That's why these things have come about because we want to give our kids concrete adventures with the caveat here that if you do all the work for your kid, then you're really not giving them (a) the adventure or (b) opportunity to fail.

Right. Right. So I think with what we're talking about

Ellie: For failure is part of Life.

Sam: Bingo. Yeah.

Ellie: It's not, it's not just a bad thing if it's, you know, there isn't, there isn't an adult out there that can't share stories of failure.

If we are protecting our kids from failure by making all of their adventures picture perfect, we're avoiding a really important lesson. And also that *failure* teaches why they should know something.

It also teaches the adults how to be better adults sometimes in those situations, because I'll be honest. I mean I'm the first one to admit, I am incredibly emotional.

I don't mean necessarily drop down and cry, but I will get angry like that. It's one of those things that when we get into adventurous situations, it teaches me, it gives me that other opportunity to use my social, emotional skills of like, okay, they can fail. I'm okay with it. We're gonna work way out of it.

The thing is that that not only helps me be a better person, but it helps my kids see that as an adult, even I can struggle with how do I manage my emotions? How do I go through it? And they can learn, (and even ask) is that a good way for them to handle it? Or is that a not so great way for them to handle it?

Ellie: And don't be like, mom,

Sam: Exactly. That's okay. I admit that. But I'm also the first one to come back and say, I'm sorry. And acknowledge it. Leading by example is huge and setting them up for success. And even sometimes letting them fail in adventures is crucial.

Now there is a story that Ellie tells me regularly because it is so pivotal when it comes to kids. It's about when you were a leader at a group home for young kids with disabilities and you really helped this young lady.

Can you tell us about that? Because it really hits home on why we want to prepare kids.

Ellie: Right. Sometimes the acceptance of certain values we think are automatic. We had a year when I worked in the first group home for mentally challenged kids in Erie, Pennsylvania. And we had five living with us between the ages of eight and 17. One of them, she was 14, had never been anywhere else except an orphanage. Then later a hospital for severely, mentally challenged people. It had always been in like a girls' dorm. So, when she came to the center, she was in a dorm for a while that was mixed. I mean, they were co-ed. They were separate areas, but you could go back and forth.

Sam: So, boys' section, girls' section,

Ellie: But they could come in the hallway and go to the lobby and all that kind of stuff. That was very new for her.

When she came to our group home, the first comment was "if somebody doesn't get a handle on this girl, we're going to have to put her on the pill."

I'm like, oh my gosh, she's like 14. You know? So it turned out that it didn't take long until the eight year olds (boys) in our group realized that they could see a lot of things when she sat, because she sat kind of Indian style, crossed legs, you could see up her robe, that kind of thing. So one day I was talking with her and I mentioned some of these things. She said, "oh, oh mom", they all called us mom and dad.

And she said, "oh mom, I don't, I don't want to be like that." And I said, "well, let's talk about it."

So, we talked about ways of behavior, buttoning a robe, be sure she has her pants on, sitting like a lady and what that meant.

After that it was a matter of literally days that I could notice her behavior. All I'd have to do is go, "you know, Mary and say her name, (which that's not her name. Just so

everybody knows.) And you could see her physically kind of give a scan of what she was doing, and you see her sit up and, and cross her legs and not, you know, be just opened to everything.

It turned out that within a very short period of time, she was our little lady. I mean, she, not in the sense of, you know, the yeah (prim and proper), but just proper behavior that she had never been taught. So her open robe with nothing on under it, that meant nothing to but that they were defining as sexual. When it really wasn't.

No, in fact, she was very clear about that. Another small instance, we had an eight-year-old boy and my son at the time was also eight. And we had that same thing happen where his caseworker came in and he went running out and she picked him up and he put arms and legs around her.

And I just looked at her and I said, "Susie, I said, what are you doing?" And she said, "well, he's...."

And I said, "don't say it because they're here to learn social behavior. It may be cute at eight, but then what do you say to him when he's 14 and 16?"

I said, "you wouldn't let my son do that" She started to say, "Well he's not... (mentally challenged)." I said, that's the point. He's not mentally challenged, but it's also not appropriate behavior. And that's why people don't want to be around them. Well, normal children need those same lessons.

Sam: Not sure if anybody's actually normal,

Ellie: ... by that, I mean, children that have no handicap that are out in the world.

If we aren't willing to share those same lessons, at 18 they won't know them. Yeah.

Sam: And that's, and that's a key feature. So, and I'm going to pull from when I was teaching high school, I had a lot of students who just genuinely had no concept of, oh, wow, I should do this in this scenario versus this. Why?

The question was always why? Well, we had to go through, you know, what is respectable, polite society. Now, I'm also the first one I attend to cuss like a sailor. It's a problem. I know that you know, I will make an off-color joke from time to time. But the point of the matter is that even if I do that around my kids, I need to be the one that leads by example say, "oh, wow, I didn't do that right." That was not acceptable from

mom on that one, taking ownership of our own behavior as adults when we are doing positive things and negative things.

Ellie: And I would add in that scenario that when kids ask why, I think sometimes we can talk about the consequences that they're already seeing by not behaving a certain way. They maybe don't understand why they don't have more friends, or the teacher doesn't like them or something like that. Many times it's small behaviors that are keeping them from being accepted. Again, I'm a seventies child, so, you know, I'm not into labels and all that kind of thing. But I do believe that sometimes our young people today, aren't aware that they're their own worst enemy.

Sam: I'm my own worst. I mean, I know that, and that's part of my problem. But if we look at it from an adventurous standpoint and this one, I would bring it back full circle for us.

When we are looking to take our kids on an adventure, we as adults need to be prepared. So that means if you're not comfortable with knots - like me, I need to refresh my memory on knots and how to do it.

First aids always crucial going through those step-by step-basis with the kids. So that if, God forbid, something happens, they can be prepared to take care of themselves.

Ellie: Even a packing list,

Sam: Packing lists in our house are crucial. They have to happen because I will forget something. That's one of the things that our kids need, they need for us to provide to them because they don't know.

So next time you think about letting your kid go outside, let them. Let them have fun, let them fail, do that awesome thing.

But if you want to go on a family adventure, really actually work through what that process is going to be for them and for you, because they won't know how to do a cool adventure for themselves as they get older, unless you've done that with them.

I've always wanted to go backpacking in the Grand Canyon. I also know I'm incredibly, ill-prepared even right now, as we speak, because (a) I've never done a large backpacking trip like that, and (b) I don't have enough gear to be able to successfully do that by myself, let alone with my family of four.

So, take that time to research, share with your kids, you're learning and actually do it with them because at the end of the day, they learn by doing and so do we.

Ellie: Yeah. And they make better adults by having all these experiences, not just events, but real, real experiences where they're learning by doing.

Yup. Yeah. Till next time, be prepared, have fun adventure in the outdoors.

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