

Parents Are Hard To Raise S02 Episode 63 Transcript Originally aired: 6/19/18

Announcer: [00:00:00] The world's becoming a dangerous place for us women. Lipstick bodyguard looks just like an innocent little lipstick but it will instantly drop any attacker to his knees so you can get away unharmed. Lipstick bodyguard fear no evil. Get yours today only at lipstick bodyguard dot com.

[00:00:37] This week on Parents Are Hard To Raise... Can our words, thoughts and actions really change our physical age? Plus a new government program promises help aging veterans. But will this new brainstorm be the panacea they promised or just another government engineered nightmare waiting to happen?

Diane: [00:01:08] Welcome to parents are hard to raise helping families grow old together without losing their minds. I'm elder care expert Diane Berardi.

[00:01:17] So I was on line the other day in a store and you know how they have those stupid, stupid, stupid roped off areas where people have to stand in line? I always feel like I'm a rat in a maze. You know, in an experiment. But anyway, I'm standing there and there was an older gentleman in front of me and he started talking to me. People always talk to me on line... I don't know why they just start talking to me. So he said... "Well you know, I'm burying my friend today. It's the last one of us. We were four good friends." And I said, "Oh I'm sorry." "Yeah," he said. "I have to go to to his funeral today." And I said, "Oh I'm sorry."

[00:02:03] He said, "Yes... we were four couples that... We did everything together. We traveled together. We ate together. We we did all these things." He said. "And I'm the last one to survive. I'm 88 years old." And I said, "Oh, I'm really sorry. But I bet you probably have other friends I know those were your close friends, but I bet you have other friends too." And he said, "Yeah... There's some other guys that I play cards with or I go to the track with was they were in their 70s." He said. "And they're younger than me and... We start to play cards, and they're going... 'It's nine o'clock. I have to go. I have to go to bed.' And he's like... "Why do you have to go to bed? And they say, 'cuz I'm old. I have to be in bed at 9 o'clock.'"

[00:02:54] Then he said, "I'm gonna drive to Canada. You know... I can do it in two days. And my friend is like, 'we can't do that in two days, it's going to take us a week. We're all we can't do that. We have to rest.'"

[00:03:06] And so, I'm looking at him and when he talks, when he starts talking about things he's going to do and things he can do, his face was lighting up and I'm thinking you know that's great. I mean, he's 88 years old and he's not worried about his age.

[00:03:32] He's telling me about the 70 year old friends that have this mindset that they can't do anything. And I'm thinking, that is the key. It's his mind. He just thinks he can do whatever whatever. And that's great!

[00:03:39] And I'm thinking about this study that was conducted in the 70s by Harvard social psychologist [00:03:47] **Dr. Ellen Langer and her graduate students. It was called the "counter-clockwise" [4.8] study.**

[00:03:53] They had this control group. Men in their late 70s, early 80s. And they were told that they were going to attend a retreat and they were just going to spend a week reminiscing about the past. So that was the control group.

[00:04:06] And then they had the experimental group where they actually redid this old monastery. So they actually took them to this place and they changed everything so that their environment was like from 1959. They totally immersed them in stuff that was from 20 years ago. And they told them that they couldn't talk about anything that happened after 1959. They had to refer to themselves, their families, their careers as if they were at that time. They had a talk about things going on in that era. They had magazines from that time. They had old black and white television and they were watching The Ed Sullivan Show.

[00:04:51] And so, before the experiment, they assess their strength, their death dexterity, hearing, vision, their memory and then of course they check them again after they were totally immersed in the study.

[00:05:07] And so, you say well what was the point of the study? It wasn't to live in the past, but it was to give mental signals to your body to reflect the energy and biological responses of a much younger person.

[00:05:21] So, by "acting as if" they were in their early 50s and early 60s, these men in the experimental group, they demonstrated improvement in hearing, in eyesight, in memory, appetite, dexterity. They were more active. Some of them, they used canes when they first walked into the monastery, or they had to have their children help them walk coming into the monastery. And when they were leaving, they were leaving on their own strength, without a cane. Some of them were even carrying their own suitcases.

[00:05:56] So, Dr. Langer concluded "we expected them to function independently we engage them as individuals and not as old people as people. So we gave them the opportunity to see themselves differently they were self-sufficient. They were active. They had a purpose. So this had an impact on them biologically.

[00:06:20] So this counter-clockwise study showed the power of possibilities. That the mind can have such an impact on the body. So Dr. Langer was saying well what other other possibilities are there that exist in terms of healing? She said well what about words doctors use when talking to patients about their disease? Or what about language? How important is language in the way doctors and patients talk about their health?

[00:06:48] You know we become vulnerable to language. For instance, she points out that the word chronic in medical terms... It's it means uncontrollable it means unmanageable. So when we think that, we're like well, what can we do about it? We can't control anything so why should I try to help myself?

[00:07:11] But yet, if you say "we don't know yet how to control it"... So then you it gives you the possibility you don't feel silly trying to help yourself.

[00:07:23] If you were brought up to seek certainties and you have been conditioned words have been conditioned to lead to just one single thought. If you're told in a particular way well that's how it is then you just accept it. You don't question it. And you give up on the control of your health.

[00:07:43] It's it's unbelievable when you think when you think about this study that she conducted. She studied mindfulness and its effect.

[00:07:52] There's her book, which I encourage you to get, [00:07:54] **Counter-Clockwise mindful health and the power of possibility.** [4.1]

[00:13:23] She talks about mindful health. It's not, you know, you have to eat right and exercise. It's how we can free ourselves from our constricting mindsets and that limits our health and well-being.

[00:08:12] You know, like this gentleman he was saying his 70 year old friends... We can't do this or that because we're old. I have to go to sleep because I'm old. Or you know you forget something you need immediately you say, well... That's because I'm old. You don't look at any other possibilities or reasons that you might have forgotten something.

[00:08:31] So, her research has shown how using different words are offering a small choice or making a subtle change in the physical environment can improve our health and our well-being.

[00:08:46] So small changes can make large differences. We have to open up ourselves. We have to open up to the psychology of possibility. And she writes and gives us so many examples in her book. Knowing what is, and what can be, are not the same thing.

[00:09:06] So, I encourage you to read that. And it was funny how I've read about her study and it hasn't come to me until I was talking to this gentleman. And he sees the power of possibility... His mind. It's great.

[00:09:21] I was visiting with my dad and my mom just this weekend. And I could see my father... The language he's using now, as opposed to probably a few months ago. He was always saying... I could do this I can do that. He never would say, 'ah I'm 90 or I'm 70". Or we'd say to him, "you really shouldn't be cutting... he has a large piece of property... Cutting the lawn. "Why? You know I can do it." He never would say, "well I'm approaching 90. I really can't do it." But now, I see all of a sudden that he's thinking that and he's saying that and he's voicing that. And he suddenly... He looks older to me. You know, and he looks... Not the same. Not the same.

[00:10:13] So, the power of the mind is something... You know, "act as if" and you you've heard that probably a million times.

[00:10:24] I also got a call the other day from a daughter. And she was concerned about her parents behaviour when they come to visit her.

[00:10:41] They come for two weeks every June to visit her. They fly there and they come. And they live in another state, so I'm like, wow that's great they get on an airplane and they come to see you.

[00:10:44] And her parents are...she told me... are in their 80s. And she thinks when they come, they should be more engaged and want to do things that she decides they should do.

[00:10:59] And we don't think about it but... We kind of plan... if your parents come to visit. Like her, they haven't seen their grandkids in a while. So, we want to take you to pick them up and drop them off at school. We want to take you to every sports event they have. We want to go to museums we want to do this want to take you places we think you want to go or things you want to do. And we sometimes don't ask them what they want to do. We just kind of plan for them. And you know she was saying to me well they just want to sit and watch television and they don't want to go out to dinner with my friends or do things that we want them to do.

[00:11:44] And when we come back I'll tell you when I told her.

Lipstick Bodyguard : [00:11:54] I want to tell you about my friend Katie. Katie is a nurse and she was attacked on her way home from work. She was totally taken by surprise. And although Katie is

only 5 feet tall and 106 pounds she was easily able to drop her 6 foot 4 250 pound attacker to his knees and get away unharmed. Katie wasn't just lucky that day she was prepared in her pocketbook. A harmless looking lipstick which really contained a powerful man stopping aerosol propellants.

[00:12:23] It's not like it was in our grandmother's day today just going to and from work or to the mall can have tragic consequences. The FBI says violent crimes committed every 15 seconds in the United States and a forcible rape happens every five minutes and chances are when something happens no one will be around to help. It looks just like a lipstick. So no one will suspect a thing which is important since experts say getting the jump on your attacker is all about the element of surprise inside this innocent looking lipstick. It's the same powerful stuff used by police and the military to disarm even the most powerful armed aggressor. In fact National Park rangers used the very same formula that's inside this little lipstick to stop two thousand pound vicious grizzly bears dead in their tracks. It's like carrying a personal bodyguard with you in your purse or your pocket. Darkness brings danger muggers and rapists use darkness to their advantage. We all know what it's like to be walking at night and hear footsteps coming at us from behind. Who's there. If it's somebody bad will you be protected your life may depend on it. My friend Katie close call needs to be a wakeup call for all of us myself included. Pick up a lipstick bodyguard and keep it with you always.

announcer: [00:13:55] You're listening to Parents Are Hard to Raise... Now, thanks to you... The number one elder care talk show on planet earth. Listen to this and other episodes on iTunes, Google Play, and on demand using me iHeart Radio app.

Diane: [00:14:18] I want to thank you so much for sending in your e-mails and your questions and even your words of encouragement. How much you like the show.

[00:14:27] We've been growing by leaps and bounds and that's all due to you. And thank you so much. Please keep sending in your questions. I tried to get to as many as I can and I promise I'll keep doing that and I'll try to get to your question.

[00:14:42] And please tell someone about the show. Because I would imagine we're all in this together we're all children of aging parents and we can help each other. There's always someone who could use the information. So please tell someone else about the show. Thanks so much.

[00:15:02] And I want to go back to the story about the call I got the other day about this woman concerned that when her parents come to visit they don't want to do things that her family has planned.

[00:15:15] And what I said to her was we had to ask our parents well what would you like to do. Maybe they just want to sit and you know... maybe They don't want to take a ride every morning or every afternoon to the school to pick up the kids or maybe they want to sit in a crowd at a sports event or in the sun or the cold or whatever. Maybe they just don't feel comfortable doing that or just don't want to do that for whatever reason. So we kind of have to just ask them and I'm sure they'll tell you or maybe they just like to sit.

[00:15:52] Maybe there they just like to do the same things that they do at home and there's nothing wrong with that. Except, when they come to visit you they have you guys around. And maybe they would just like everybody to sit with them and watch television all together. Maybe they enjoy that.

[00:16:08] You know, not everybody likes to do the same things. And just because they don't want to, it doesn't mean you have to be concerned about them... You have to be worried about them. Ask them what they want to do and I'm sure they'll tell you.

[00:16:40] Just say geez, what would you like to do? We have the park here or museums or we can go to Johnny's baseball game or something. And leave the choice up to them.

[00:16:34] She also mentioned to me... "They're fixated on the past. You know, they just talk about the past and I want them to not do that. And make new friends. Some of their friends have passed away and I want to encourage them to make new friends."

[00:16:52] Well... Sometimes people talk about the past for different reasons. Maybe their present is uneventful. But maybe they want it that way.

[00:17:04] We kind of think... Well they've got to be doing things. And maybe they don't want to. You know, choosing not to do something... Maybe sitting and reading a book... Well that's choosing to do something. So, sometimes it's not what they remember or what they talk about, but why.

[00:17:25] You know... Maybe they are talking about a happier time. Or like the gentleman I was telling you about... "Well, we were four couples and we did this." And he was reminiscing about that because his wife was alive and all his friends were alive.

[00:17:39] So we can't get focused on... They're not doing everything we want them to do. And if your parents are like mine they're not going to tell you, "Well... we don't want to do that. They're just going to go along with it.

[00:17:53] But you want to make that visit happy for everybody. And you want to do things together so everybody has a good time.

[00:18:03] And, you know... Like I said to that gentleman, when I was online with him, I said, well I'm sure you have other friends. And he did.

[00:18:14] Now maybe your parents... maybe they don't have any other friends. And I know you want to encourage them and you can suggest things. You know wow... Especially in a retirement community or maybe to volunteer... Things where they can meet other people. But you can't force them to do it. But you can just suggest and maybe when you go visit them, you can say, well gee, what do you want to do? And maybe they'll do something where you can take them somewhere where they have the opportunity to meet other people. Volunteering is a great thing. We talk about that all the time.

[00:18:53] I was talking to a gentleman the other day and he volunteers in a hospital, in the pediatric unit.

[00:19:04] And he goes into the unit and they take babies and he holds the babies and he talks to them and that's how he volunteers. It's a wonderful thing.

[00:19:14] Who would think of that? So sometimes we only think about volunteering as being a Wal-Mart greeter or something... Or I guess you get paid for that. But anyway, volunteering... I don't know... To go give out magazines in a hospital or something. And maybe that's not for your parent. But there are so many things, so many ways to volunteer. So don't worry about it.

[00:19:52] And just ask them what would they like to do. There's nothing wrong with that.

[00:19:46] I get a lot of calls from veterans families who are on waiting lists to get care provided to them in the in their homes. And I know one of a county agency that I work with in the area that I'm

in they have they get faxes and faxes and faxes of veteran patients that need care in their homes and they just can't provide the care.

[00:20:13] And you will hear, I'm sure, wherever you are in the U.S. there's a national shortage of home care workers of home health aides. And people are not going to be home health aides. Why? Well it's it's very hard it's hard work. It's not a lot of pay and it's you're going into people's homes and you're taking care of people and ... you have training you have somebody telling you what to do you have to deal with all uncertainty.

[00:20:53] You have to go into a home, you don't know sometimes what you're going into. And today, there are so many different fields you can go into. So many different things you can do. When you're a home health aide you're driving from house to house. Sometimes you're giving six showers a day. Doing things.

[00:21:12] So there is there is a shortage of people going into the field. I know with Medicaid, with veterans the reimbursement rates instead of going up they're going down. So how does the service then pay their employees? How do they cover them for all the things that they need to be covered for? So it's a it's a difficult situation. They the V.A. has turned to foster care for veterans. It's just a different avenue. Instead of putting them in nursing homes. So what they do is, if you qualify, there's what's called the [00:21:52] **medical foster home program** [2.2] and it provides housing and care for veterans. Instead of going into a nursing home, for people who they can't live safely on their own. The veteran though, has to pay the caregiver. So they say it's about between 1500 to 3000 dollars a month depending on the location.

[00:22:16] So it's saving the government about ten thousand dollars a month because they're not paying for nursing home care. But it's kind of a difficult thing to scale up because the V.A. accepts only foster homes that of course meet strict qualifications. So for the veteran they say it's a chance to live in a home setting with people who treat them like family.

[00:22:43] Now the V.A. kind of... You know, they meet their obligation to care for veterans. And it's at a reduced cost because the veteran is paying room and board directly to the caregiver.

[00:22:57] The V.A. can't pay for it directly because it's not institutional care. So... Foster homes... There's all kinds of problems with foster homes I mean you hear all kinds of horror stories. I haven't heard any hard stories with this medical foster home program yet but it's fairly new. They have right now about 700 licensed caregivers who have these... That you can have I think up to three veterans and provide... But you have to provide round the clock supervision and care. According to the V.A. So you can't work outside the home so you have to be there to live in and you have to tend to the person's needs 24/7. If let's say you have to go out then you can supply relief staff so that you can go somewhere et cetera.

[00:23:58] Now the V.A. Of course they say OK the Forster home the people have to pass a federal background check. They have to complete 80 hours of training before they can accept patients. They have to have 20 hours of additional training each year and they have to allow the V.A. to make announced and unannounced home visits. Again, I said, they can't work outside the home. They have to be certified and maintain that in first day CPR and medicine administration. So it's it sounds like a great program.

[00:24:36] I haven't... I just I'm a little leery but what do we hear? We hear horror stories about nursing homes, about the day care. These people aren't are not able to get care in the homes like they need. So what do you think?

[00:25:05] When you look at, it it's like, oh my gosh this person... Maybe they they live alone and they can't take care of themselves. So they have to go into a nursing home. Here OK. If they get into a home they can feel like, wow they live in a home with family.

[00:25:13] So, how did they have to qualify? Well, of course the veteran has to be enrolled in V.A. health care, they have to have a serious chronic disabling medical condition, that would say they require nursing home level of care.

[00:25:28] So what do you think? E-mail me on what you think about this. I'm kind of... I'm not sure. Like I said, I'm reserving my full opinion until I hear more about it. More stories.

[00:25:44] You know this is a great idea, but I've seen government great ideas that it sounds great on paper and it looks like wow this is going to be good. And we just... I don't know.

[00:25:59] You know it's kind of scary. I mean you hear all kinds of things. Nursing home care and V.A. hospitals... I remember going to see my uncle he was in a V.A. hospital, a nursing home, excuse me and oh my gosh, he was just sitting there all by himself. Nobody was talking to him. Nobody was feeding him. So I don't know... I'd like to hear your opinion on this.

[00:26:29] They are saying that the V.A. is actively promoting this program.

[00:26:35] Yeah... Because what do we do? There's veterans that we have to take care of. What do we do? So I'd like to hear your opinion.

[00:26:44] I hope this episode gave you some insight into something you're dealing with. Remember the very best conversations happen at ParentsAreHardToRaise.org So please keep emailing your questions. Because remember, your story can help someone else.

[00:26:59] If you found something helpful in this episode... Episode 63... Please subscribe to our show on iTunes or iHeart Radio.

[00:27:07] And I'd be so grateful if you'd shared this episode with your family and friends.

[00:27:11] Parents Are Hard To Raise as a CounterThink Media production. The music used in this broadcast was managed by Cosmo Music New York, New York, under license of Broadcast Music Incorporated.

[00:27:21] Thank you so much for listening. I look forward to reading your comments and can't wait till we meet up again on the next episode of Parents Are Hard To Raise.

[00:27:31] Till then... May you forget everything you don't want to remember and remember everything you don't want to forget. See you again next week!