

Ep14

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SPEAKERS

Michelle Rogers



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Welcome to the autism mommy's potty talk Podcast. I'm Michelle B Rogers, autism mom and life coach. I help parents of children with autism who are pre verbal to start communicating potty train guarantee. Welcome to the autism moms potty talk Podcast, episode 14. Hey, everybody, Michelle, here, I'm so excited to have you continue to join me on this podcast. I first wanted to start today's podcast by just sharing that how humbled I am by how many people have reached out to me since I've launched it. I think I watched it a couple months ago. And we are moving ahead, we are full steam ahead and the the amount of downloads keeps increasing. The feedback I'm getting is tremendous. I see that the podcast is ranking in different countries, it blows my mind the reach something like this can have. So I'm so honored and blessed to have this ability to share my message to help as many families as I can with their kids on the autism spectrum. So thank you for that. I thought I might start before we get into the topic today, which is to help you all solve for problem behaviors. And I thought it would be a great idea just to start with a little update on our family. If you didn't know, I am a mother. I'm an I'm an autism mom. I have a daughter that was diagnosed on the spectrum. One month after her second birthday, he also have a neurotypical son, Juliana is going on. She's 10 years old, she's going on 11. She'll be 11 in November, and she is thriving. She just started her second year in a general education class with minimal supports. So she is now in fifth grade. She is thriving, she is chatty, she is fully potty trained all of the things. I think one of the things that really made all the difference. And this is why I always say this so much on the podcast. And any messaging that I put out there is that me believing in my ability to show up and be the best mother, I could for her really set her on this path. And she still blows my mind every day. At this point, I'd say with Giuliana, you wouldn't even know she's on the autism spectrum. If I didn't tell you. Or you had a very trained die, you might not know otherwise, she is thriving, she has friends, she's going to do this big sleepover event for her birthday with her two closest friends. We're so excited, just to see her thrive and see what her future holds. It's just been such a ride. And you know, in the beginning, I probably would have traded for anything. But now I say you know, everything that's happened to us has made me such a stronger human being a really supportive, intentional mother and I wouldn't trade it for anything. I'm at the point in my life where I believe that the challenges that we've had with Juliana were brought to us so that I could heal my girl and I can help as many of you heal your babies as well. So I'm so honored to have this platform to be able to speak to you and help you with your, with your kids on the

spectrum. So if anyone needs any support, you feel free to reach out to me, this is all I do every day. It's my mission now. Till the day I die to help as many families have the opportunity to have the future that Giuliana is gonna have it's a real blessing for us. And it's such an honor to be here. I can't say that enough. Okay, so without further ado, I want to dive into today's topic, which is the third life skill that I believe every child needs to have a chance to live a life of independence. So I have this philosophy that every child with autism, no matter where they fall in the spectrum, if they have three life skills, they will be able to have an independent life, their chances of an independent life increase greatly. And the first one is they are potty trained. The second one is they're able to communicate. And the third is they don't have any problem behavior so they can sit and attend and learn in school. And today we are going to talk about problem behaviors. We've already done an extensive amount of time I'm planning on my podcast already about potty training, we did a two part series on communication. So if you haven't checked out any of those, you can go back and listen to previous episodes. But now we're going to dive deep into problem behaviors. And one of the things about problem behaviors I'd like to just first put out there is that nine times out of 10 problem behaviors are connected with a child's inability to communicate functionally. And when I say communicate, I'm very intentional and using that word because first we have to communicate and then we can potentially have vocal language and I'm always pushing for vocal language in my program, but I need functional communication skills first, and with Juliana in particular when right before she was diagnosed, I felt like a black cloud had settled over our house and she was this happy baby and then it was gone. And I remember even saying to my mother, you know, where did this happy baby go. And when we taught her sign language, her first sign that she learned was cookie. And when she learned that sign, I was so floored because I didn't even think she could learn, because I didn't think she could comprehend. And she was with me the whole entire time. She just just, we all have this belief as parents when we have a pre verbal child that just because the math doesn't work that we think the ears are broken. And that's not the case spending 20 years or more on on, on alert than they are. Because they're they're not verbal yet. But she learned that sign by the end of day one, she had 10 signs by the end of the week. And I always say to people like when as soon as she had those 10 signs, which really represented anything that she would really request throughout any given day, the black cloud lifted and the Tantrums almost stopped at the same time. So the first thing I'm going to start off by saying is, before we dive into the the how to solve a problem behaviors, we want to understand that communication is a big part of why they may exist. And if you don't have communication in place, go back and listen to those podcasts. And you'll get whatever you need to get that up and running. Okay, so now this, the rest of this training is going to be based on a guide I've created, it's actually a free guide. And if you want a copy of this guide, all you have to do is email me you're going to email Michelle, at Michelle.rogers.com. Just let me know you heard this on the podcast and you'd love a copy of this survival guide. I call it the autism moms Survival Guide to problem behaviors, it is free, so just send me an email, I'll be happy to send this to you. So this whole guide is really what this podcast is going to be all about. And what I want to really start with is just kind of explaining how like I dissect problem behaviors. So I can figure out like what we do, what we normally do as autism parents is that when we have a problem, like if our child like, let's say, our child's on the playground and out of nowhere slaps a kid. And when the child slaps the kid, we're just freaked out, we're immediately sent into a fight or flight and we just, you know, rush the kid home or apologize to the parents. And then we just like, I'm never gone to that playground again, right? And we go home and we're crying the whole way home. And we're thinking about it, we're just wishing they wouldn't be like this. And we're just going through these emotions just feeling like shit the entire time. And we never go back and we look at like why it happened in the first place. And because we don't do that, what ends up happening is we just feel bad for ourselves, we feel bad for the situation, we feel hopeless, we don't know what to do this is autism, right, we have those shitty thoughts

about the autism diagnosis. And that's because it's autism, maybe it can't be solved or it be very difficult to solve. And then what ends up happening is we never really look at why it happened to avoid it from happening again. And then another incident will happen and you'll go right through the same emotions, again, you'll be putting out the fire in the moment of trying to neutralize the, the incident, and then you're gonna go home and feel like shit again. And then there goes like what I call the Krazy eight, and I go deep into this in the in the guide.



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But the only way to have a different life is you've got to start making different decisions in those moments. And not necessarily in the moment. But like in the beginning, what we need to do is be able to look at it, you know, when you're dealing with the problem behaviors. So if you're trying to slap the kid on the playground, you're in the middle of trying to put that fire out from the field, when we go home, and we kind of rest our, our nervous system we get out of that fight or flight response. Instead of instead of rolling into a negative thought pattern about what happened, what we need to do is want to look at, like, why is this happening in the first place. And if I can create, like, if I can understand why it happened, maybe either I can avoid it. Or I can actually put you know a system in place so that it doesn't happen so that the child never engages in that type of behavior again, but the only way that that can happen is we gotta gotta get out of our own way. We got to get out of that crazy eight loop of feeling like shit going into fight or flight and feeling like shit, that happens again, we go into fight or flight feel like shit, see how it is just keeps going in that loop. So the first step above all things is to start to really try and understand that if I keep thinking the same things, it's always like the definition of insanity. If I keep doing the same things over and over and expect a different outcome, it's never gonna happen. If I want a different outcome, I've got to handle every one of those situations differently from this point forward. So I go deep into this into the guide if like I said, if you want it, you're just gonna drop me an email. Okay. All right. So now what I want to do is I want to talk about an acronym that is widely used in ABA, if you didn't know I'm an absolute ABA lover. I'm going to do a podcast on like an intro to ABA just to kind of give you an idea of what it's like I know there's it's got a bad rap out there in the world. And just and I just want to I don't want to go off on a tangent here but just like anything else in the world, right? We have doctors out there that old practice of medicine, right the old practice of therapy, and some of them suck. And ABA is no different. You know, we don't throw out a effective therapy or therapy It's helped so many children, including my own, just because of a couple of bad practitioners. So I don't want to I want to honor and respect anyone who has had a bad experience with ABA, I'm not discounting and I'm not saying it didn't happen. But what if it could have been done in a way that was supportive and loving and caring? And that's the only type of ABA that I've ever experienced the only type of ABA, we teach in my masterclass. So I want to just kind of just put that out there real quick, we're gonna do a whole podcast on this because I know that ABA just gets such a bad rap. And I understand why. But like, again, it's we go from there, just like there are bad practitioners out there, there's going up for doctors, or lawyers, or teachers or whatever there's going to be there's also going to be good practitioners of it. And maybe the therapy is good, and the way it was being applied was so bad. Okay. All right. So in ABA, there's an acronym that they all stand by when we're trying to solve for problem behaviors. And it's, it's called meats like meat s, like like beef, but meats, right. And as Aquaman is, for the reasons, unwanted behavior occur in our children with autism, and I would even venture to say how when it occurs for anybody, and the first letter in the acronym is m. So if a child is engaging in problem behaviors, it could be for m, which stands for medical, that means that they might be in physical pain or discomfort. So if a child is engaging in like tantruming on the floor, or hitting, maybe they're in pain, and that could be the reason that it's

happening. The second letter in the acronym is E, and that's for escape or avoidance, they want to get out of doing an unwanted activity. Okay. The third act, a letter in the acronym is A and that's for attention seeking, they're doing the behavior because they're gaining attention, whether it's good or bad. And then we have tangible T, that's the wanting access to a physical activity, an object or even a person, they could be wanting access to someone and then could be behaving in a problem behavior way to get access to somebody. And S stands for sync, sensory seeking when they're doing it because it feels good, like it's an automatic reinforcement. So the first thing we need to understand is that when a child engages in problem behaviors, it is going to fall into one of those five categories. There's not one problem behavior that won't fall into the five. And I've really tested this theory out with any problem behavior a parent brings to me. And what we have to do is we have to kind of understand the problem behavior inside and out first, to be able to figure out which of the letters in the acronym it represents. So how we do that is we in ABA, they do something called ABC. And by the way, I'm not formally trained in ABA, I am a mother who is just seeing this in my life since my daughter was two, we actually do have BCBA's in my masterclass, so I can learn a lot from them too. But I honestly a lot of my experience is just in the street. I'm working in the street here with these kids, like kids, your kids and everybody's kids. And I just know that way I have to reverse engineer how I sat handle problems and it really kind of is just in alignment with what I've been exposed to as a mother who has learned this informally from seeing it being done in her home for years and years and years. Okay, so when we are analyzing a problem behavior, we can't make a blanket statement. So let's say a little Suzy bites every you know, that's her big problem behavior anywhere she goes she bites she in the morning she bites at night she bites when we're at the playground she bites right so that Biting is her problem behavior. We can't have a blanket we can't say okay, we need to solve for biting well we need to solve for is the reason why she's biting in the first place. So even if Biting is her go to for a lot of different functions, right? It could be for any one of the you know, it could be for any one of the examples that we just gave up the five we have to create a saw based upon the exact reason each time she has it. So if little Susie bites because she doesn't want to eat her carrots, that's going to be different than if little Susie's biting because she wants to go out and ride her bike and we have to understand the function of why she's doing this biting behavior before we can create the sob because each one of those letters in the acronym are gonna have a different skill set and how you would solve it Okay, so the way that we do that is we get the ABC data of a problem behavior incident so let's say little Susie was at the table and we asked her eat or carrots and she bit my hand when I when I put the bowl down right so what we need to understand is the ABCs of what happened so the A is the represents the antecedent another acronym I guess so A is antecedent what happened before the problem behavior what was Little Susie do a little Susie was sitting happily at the table waiting for her food right? Then B is the B represents the behavior what is it look like when little Susie engages in the problem behavior, okay, she she bent my hand when I put down I said you have teacher character. She bent my head, okay, and then see what's A consequence. That's what happens after the problem behavior. And then once we understand the ABCs of any type of problem behavior, that's when we can create the SOP. But let me preface this again by saying, if you were trying to do the ABCs, right after Susie beat you, and you're bleeding, and you're pissed, and you're all through the emotions, that's not when we do this, we have to calm down and take a minute, take a step back and get that drone view going. So we can create, figure out why she did this so we can create the assault. And just because she fights for everything, doesn't mean it's gonna be the same acumen every time. Okay. So in this particular example, I'm just I'm doing something off the top of my head, right? So right before I fed Susie, the carrots, she was happily sitting eating her nuggets, right? She likes doughnuts. And then I say, okay, Susie, I handed the character Susie, you got each character now. And she takes my hand and she bites, right? And I'm freaking out, right? So the actual app, the antecedent was she was sitting, eating

her lunch, happily, I say to her and hand her a bowl of carrots. So you got each character, you can't go play or some shit like that, right? And then she goes, and she bites my hand. And that's the actual behavior. So she takes my hand and she bites it. She doesn't want to eat it, right? That's what I'm gonna assume. Right? So then I freak out. I'm like, Oh, my gosh, you know, why did you do that? Blah, blah, I start yelling at her. And then maybe what ends up happening after I yell at her is I put her in a timeout, and she never has to eat the carrots. So what we've taught her in that example, first, we've got to figure out which x which of the five letters that represents. So obviously, I would say in this example, she wanted to get out of and unwanted activities, she didn't want to eat her carrots. And in the guide, I explained this, really break it down, like how you know, that's what it is, right? So typically occurs in response to being presented with a nonpreferred, demand condition, stimulus or environment. So the nonpreferred hears that she doesn't want to eat or vegetables, right. And it's in response to a demand or trying something new. It could be like I've never presented character, she doesn't like trying things new. And this is how it happens. It could also be response to a cleanup of a preferred activity. So that's really interesting. It could be a response to work that is difficult, boring, overwhelming, frustrating, again, right? Where it's easy to escape motivated behaviors, or can be a response to a directive to transition typically happens during the same activities, or a time of day. So here's what happened in the example, I had Susie Susie's eatin lunch. Happily, I tell her, she's gotta eat her cat, she bites me, I get pissed. I say, All right, now you get up and do a timeout. And then when Susie is done with the timeout, she goes off about her day. What I've done now in that example is I've reinforced the behavior, meaning that if I buy her, I don't have to eat these carrots. So when I happen, she says, the next time she presents carrots or broccoli or whatever, I'm just going to do the same thing. And I'll ever have to eat the carrots. And that's the obviously the not way we want to handle it. So the first thing we want to do with any problem behaviors is want to potentially we always want to look for I always call that the autism moms BombSquad method, right? Where I want to try and avoid a problem from happening to begin with. Okay, so even before this whole happens, the next time I have to present Suzy carrots, is there a way I could present it to avoid getting bit in the first place? All right, that's always going to be your first question to ask yourself, Is there something I could do here to avoid getting bit in the first place? Once I have that answer? Then I say okay, she needs to she's learned that if she bites she doesn't she gets out of eating these carrots. I need her to eat the carrots. How do I go about it in the future? So in the future, what we need to look at is like, a is there a way I can present the character she wants to at least try them. And then to is if I can do it in this way, can I avoid being bit to begin with. All right, and I go in depth in this in the



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in the guide. But this is just to give you a quick example. And not only was I able to decipher where I was going wrong, right by giving her a timeout. And then she goes into timeout, and I never make her finish the carrots, she learns that this behavior works well. And I've loved behavior, because behavior to me is the raus purest form of communication for any species. And behavior are so important for our children on the spectrum, especially if their communication is just emerging, because there's no room for interpretation. So if I say Susie, you're eating these carrots, and I see it through and so those carrots are eaten, what I say is what I mean 100% of the time, there's no room for interpretation for the child and that's what our children on the spectrum need. Actually what all children need is they need to know that you are a constant in their life that what you say is exactly what you mean 100% of the time, when we start giving idle threats, that's when shit falls apart, because then they're saying, Okay, I always imagined I saw my mom's in my program, I say, imagine you're like this electric

fence and they're your baby calves, right? They're literally testing each section of the fence for weaknesses. And every time you Idle Threat and you don't see it through, then they're just going to assume that you don't mean it. And that's what that length, that's what that behavior means to them. So we want to solve our problem behaviors in this example of having them do a nonpreferred, we can come up with ways that will make them happily comply, but I can never ever remove the requirement of doing the behavior. Otherwise, she thinks that she's one. Simple as that it's so easy. I'm gonna give you another example. So another good example of this is my daughter when we were potty training her she was pee trained first and we had a problem with poop. And for five weeks in a row, I'd take her to safety swim, which is where she would go and have her swim lessons. And every week she'd she'd poop in the pool. And every time she pulled in the pool, everyone else was getting the lessons how to get out, they had at the school had to call anyone who was coming down for the next hours lesson, tell them that they can't come because the pools got to be close to three hours while we clean it. So the first couple of times, I didn't think anything of it, because lots of kids do it. But then I started to realize this was being done intentionally. Right. And so I did the ABCs. And the VA reversed. Let me just tell you, this was very traumatic for me is probably one of the most dramatic things I went through. When we were trying to figure out why she kept pooping in the pool. Because I know everybody by week three knew it was her. And by week five, I was determined to quit safety swim, that was gonna be the absolutely worst thing I could have done for this behavior, because now I'm telling her if we quit, or I'm telling her if we don't solve for this, you can just shut in any pull you want, right? So that day, I remember the fifth time I was like, oh my god, I can't believe she did this again. I can't believe it. And I pull her out and we lock ourselves in the bathroom, and I cried, and I waited for everybody to leave. Because I was so embarrassed. I was humiliated. I couldn't believe she kept doing this. He's poor parents. And of course, it was the middle of winter surveys, packing the kids up in the snow outfits after they get them out of the beans. It's just a disaster. And I made sure listened at the door crying to make sure that nobody was there, except for the staff getting ready to clean the shit out of the pool. And I came out in a circle and I said, Listen, I promise we won't come back until I solve for this. And I went home and I went through my fight or flight with this just like I'm telling you guys, this is exactly what happens for me. And then I calmed down. I told my husband we're quitting. We're just never going to do swim anymore. I just I can't I can't go through this again. But we'll ABA and then once I calmed down I thought about Mr. Cheese doing this for a reason. Why is she doing this? And I at that time, I didn't have meats like I haven't like I'm explaining it to you now I didn't have that guide back then. But I knew there was a reason she was doing it. And I actually surmise that she was doing it. I originally thought like it was sensory like she liked the way it felt in the pool. But I think she felt like this was a great place to do it. Right because she didn't have to do it in the toilet, which was not her preferred. So I would almost even say that this was getting out of the unwanted activity of going in the toilet. If I go in the pool, she never puts me on the toilet because I already went poop I don't have to go sit on the toilet now to try and poop. Do you see what I'm saying? So the next week, I went back and I got my bathing suit on and I said I'm gonna stand on the side here. And I'm going to look for her cues because this little swim instructor only sees her 30 minutes every week. I'm with her 24/7 So I'm going to look for the cues where I think she's about to poop. And that's exactly what I did. I literally went right to the edge of the pool. And as soon as I saw that she looked like she's about to take a poop. I jumped in I grabbed her I ran into the bathroom, and I sat her on the twig didn't poop the first time right? So I'm like, Listen, don't poop in the pool. I'm watching you every time you and she loves swim, so it's really stuck for her she did not want to get out right? So I don't poop in the pool, the pool in the pool. I'm gonna take you out we're gonna want to toilet again. Right? So then I put her got her dress, we go back out again. She goes in the pool. I think I see the face again. I take her I grab her. I had to be willing to be in this supposed environment to solve for this behavior. Ratner. And I got she pooped in the pool. And she never did that again.

And had I quit how they went about it in a way that wouldn't have been supportive. We wouldn't be where we are today. Alexa stops you have Alexa She reminds me getting on my next call but I just wanted to really hit this home for you guys that if we want to solve our children's problem behaviors, we can't go run and hide under a couch cushion. We can't go and just I'll never go to swim again. I'll never go to the target where they threw the tantrum will never go to the playground where our kid but that other kid right? I have to be willing to become the detective to create the solve for these behaviors. Had I done that that day and we quit swim. Who knows how much longer it would have taken to get her poop train. Who knows where she would be today as a swimmer and she's on an amazing swim team. She's doing wonderful Now had I quit I don't even know if that would have had Good. So I hope today's podcast was helpful. If you want a copy of this guy, just send me an email Michelle at Michelle B rogers.com. That's Michelle with two L's mi ch. E ll E. At Michelle B as in boy Rogers, our og ers.com. I'll be happy to send you this guide. I hope this podcast episode was hopeful, help hopeful, hopeful and helpful. And I'll see you next time. Bye everyone.



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If you're ready to help your baby now with potty training, communication or stopping their problem behaviors, I want to invite you to watch my free 10 minute video training that shows you how I took my daughter with autism from pre verbal to sign language potty training with a sign to making sounds and then speaking, head over to Michelle be rogers.com forward slash training. That's Michelle M i c h e ll e B as in boy Rogers r o g e r s.com forward slash training. See you there