

# Ep18 podcast

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## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

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00:04

Welcome to the autism mommy's potty talk Podcast. I'm Shelby Rogers, autism mom and life coach. I help parents of children with autism who are pre verbal to start communicating potty train guarantee.



00:23

Hello family is Michelle here and I'm excited to share with you a amazing presentation I provided to a summit that was done in October it was called the autism parenting Summit. And they asked me to be a speaker and the autism parents Summit is an online virtual event for parents of children with autism. It is run by Autism parenting magazine. And they reached out they saw all the amazing things we were doing to help families just like you. And they asked me to host a conversation and they pick the topic. And it was



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interesting because I never really thought of it this way. But I can't think of a better way or time to share this, then now because we have something very special planned for you guys in November. So we're gonna be announcing more information on that on next week's podcast, you want to make sure you look out for it. bookmark it, put a reminder, share this with anyone who could use support if they have children with autism, adult adults with autism, I'll help anybody that I have a very special announcement we're going to be doing something amazing for November in honor of my daughter Julianne his birthday, she'll be 11 We actually going to hang out this weekend in an indoor waterpark and jersey, we're leaving tonight, we're so excited to do this. I think she's gonna she's just through the moon. I'm gonna take lots of videos and photos, I'm gonna share it with you on this very special presentation I'm gonna do an honor for birthday in November is going to be a free workshop and you guys are all invited. So if you want to get in on that, you want to make sure you send an email to Michelle MI, CH e ll e at Michelle B rogers.com. And you need to come back and check next week and we will have a way for you to get information and get in on that special free event. We're gonna do prizes, I'm gonna do some coaching. I'm going to answer questions gonna be amazing. I'm gonna have special guests. We're gonna go it's gonna be fine. Okay, so back to the topic of today. Autism Summit is an online summit that I was a part of in October. And they had me as a speaker, they've seen the work that I've been doing helping all these families. I love this. They

see my mission. They knew I was an autism mom, and they said, I want you to come on, be a speaker at the summit. And I want you to tell us the lessons that your daughter with autism has taught you. And I never like thought about it this way. And I really had to like, put together I guess my thoughts on this whole journey and what she has taught me and she's She has taught me a lot, you know, being Juliana's mother has made me a better human being on this planet. And

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you know, when she got diagnosed, I was so angry with God, I thought he had cursed her. And then I kind of had this evolution of thinking throughout the years as we've gone from nonverbal to look teaching her sign language to teaching her to verbally speak again potty trained with a sign to go from the most restrictive Special Education autism classroom to where she is today. She's in her second year in a Gen Ed fifth grade class going on asleep over this weekend to celebrate her birthday with her two closest friends at a beautiful water park in Jersey. And

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yeah, she's taught me a lot. So this was a really heartfelt speaking engagement. I've never done anything like this before I cried, I got emotional. And I said, You know what, I'm gonna have to share this on my podcast. So I hope you guys enjoy this. Listen to our story. Hope it resonates with you. Listen to how I talk about all of the things that she's taught me. In fact, I went from believing that I was cursed when she was diagnosed, she was ruined that God ruined her to where I am today where I believe that God sent this journey to me on purpose so I could heal her. And then I could help other families do the same for their babies. So I hope you enjoy this was very sentimental for me and perfect timing because we're gonna be celebrating the fuck out of her birthday next month. Enjoy.

 04:16

Hello, everybody. This is the autism parenting Summit. If you are not familiar with what we do, this is a bi annual summit where we get the leading experts in the field of autism. We get autism parents, we get people on the spectrum themselves. We speak to behavioral therapists, occupational therapists and our host of people who are part of this wonderful community to share their tips and tricks and presentations and interviews, all to improve the lives of the families within the autism community. My name is Josh Allen and I'm the editor of autism parenting magazine. So you

 05:00

In this specific session today, we are speaking to Michelle Rogers. She's the founder and CEO of an organization called champions for our children. And she's going to talk to you about what exactly they do. But more importantly, she's an autism mom. And her daughter Juliana was born in November 2012. Today, she's going to turn the tables around a little bit. She's not going

to be the expert that tell us what she did. But she's going to tell us what lessons her daughter Juliana has taught her over the years. Michelle, it is an absolute pleasure having you here. Welcome to the autism parenting Summit.

 05:47

Hi, everybody. My name is Michelle Rogers. I'm so excited to be here. As one of the speakers for the autism Summit. I follow the summit every year and it's an honor to have been selected as a speaker. I'm sure many of you don't know who I am. I am an autism parent just like you and I'm also a life coach for parents of children with autism. I run a group coaching program for parents of children with autism, helping them with everything with autism, potty training, communication problem behaviors, eloping picky eating, you name it, we cover it.

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The program's just kind of all encompassing, and I'm really proud of it. We've been we're going on our third year of doing it. And we've had so many families come through the program, I have a 100% success rate for potty training and communication. And I'm just so honored to be here and share with you today the lessons I've learned from my daughter Juliana, who is also on the autism spectrum.

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So this is me, I'm Michelle Rogers. I'm an autism mom and life coach kind of just gave you guys a quick rundown of that. And I wanted to go over a quick agenda of what I'm going to be going talking about with you today. And the first thing I want to do is share our story. I'm going to talk a little on it, but I have this beautiful video we created that I think just does such a it's such a good job of kind of explaining who we are and where we how we got to where we are today, I want to talk about a philosophy that I teach my students about called the Big Three and these are the life skills that I believe every child on the spectrum needs for a chance of a life of independence. So we're going to talk about that today. And then I want to talk about the actual lessons I've learned from Juliana. So let's cop in and we're going to just start by sharing our video story

 07:34

I remember when I got pregnant with my daughter I felt so grateful and so blessed my life up until that point had been pretty rocky I'd have a lot of bumps and bruises along the way and I finally thought that I was turning the corner and God is blessing you with this beautiful gift of a child and

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finally something was going on away. And then when she was born she was just absolutely perfect. I had all of these dreams and expectations from our affordable things I thought she was going to do

was going to do



08:12

right after her first birthday I started to notice her behavior changes she went from you know saying mash



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he was obsessed with authority score. Mama Dad Dad she's saying it all I got a



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big hit all her milestones up to that point. She walked at one she was eating solid she just you know she looked really good. And then I just remember her it felt almost overnight or very quickly, where her demeanor just changed from a super happy baby to crying and tantrums frustrated all the time. I remember saying to my mom one day don't



08:55

happen baby girl but I didn't think anything past it. I think I was kind of not ready to fathom that something could be off even though maybe the telltale signs were there



09:17

just



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gotta get



09:23

grounded get dressed sorry.



09:33

started to lose the words that she had me. She wasn't saying mama anymore. She was saying that. She just seemed really disconnected from us. Instead of playing with her toys. She would take them dump them all at her toy box and just start twisting around her hands aimlessly. No intended purpose. Really kind of in denial about it. And then I remember one day we were in the middle of a store and all of a sudden out of nowhere she just like, started like



10:00

reaming and yelling like somebody slapped I don't even know what that was. And I was so I was so mortified I don't even know what to do. I was so scared I literally just love the half full part in the store picked her up and just



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went out of there never went to that store again, I'm so I just didn't even know what to think. And that was probably the first time that really kind of stung for me that maybe someone is



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diagnosed or



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they can diagnose it right away, they said that you she was too young for a diagnosis. I don't even know what they meant when they said that was what I said no idea what they were talking about. And then they said, you know,



10:41

you know, we'll come back then if you're not seeing progress. And so okay, you know, and a couple months later, I'm watching the speech therapist bite on the floor, I'm not seeing any progress and felt like she was getting a little worse. And then we went for our two year olds wellness visit. And the doctor said that she was behind, she wasn't using 20 words with intent. And that was just, that was probably just the knife my heart. At that point, I really couldn't deny that something was out with her anymore. So then I called the County back in and she was diagnosed on the spectrum. And I remember that day was the worst days of my life. That was the that was my darkest hour, I could easily say that, as a mother, as a woman, as just a human being was probably




11:23


one of the hardest times I had ever gone through. And I remember just being so





11:30


happy with God so thankful to be


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doing


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that in


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a given. And for a while dad struggled, I struggled to figure out what this meant, and we're gonna do or how this was gonna define her all those dreams, I have a future which is completely shattered, I had no idea what was going to happen next. And I went from just old to just complete blank. When I thought about the future.

 12:01  
One night, I was thinking, you know, I'm gonna die, and who's going to care for her.

 12:07  
And something about that thought to snap me out of my depression and my anger and my fear and simplicity, we got to work very, you know, I promised that when she was born, I was gonna be the best mother I could beat on

 12:21  
that promise hasn't changed that that should be more now than ever, not less. She needs me now.

 12:29  
And I didn't know at the time what we were capable of, or what she had in those changes that mind shift mindset shift was gonna do, but

 12:39  
I wanted to know that at the end of every night, I look myself in the mirror with confidence. He said, You do everything you could to show up to the best possible and if the answer was yes, and that was a good day, and I wanted to yes





12:57

100% And no matter where the cards fell, I know I can do this for saying I gave her everything. Everything I know Reeboks and as I've navigated this world with her and walked away that day, I thought I really just grabbed the bull by the horns table perfect. You're sis advocate. I'm not a special education. Master's degree teacher. I don't know any. I've never had any formal training in APA but I knew that I was important whatever I needed to learn to be really strong for her. And Juliana lost all of her language. Honestly Cheerios.



13:43

She is verbal when she was diagnosed. She



13:50

taught her sign language



14:05

tell me



14:07

in the sun



14:10

then she went from sign language she weren't vaccinations



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then she started to speak



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the IPP



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went from the most assertive preschool environment. She's insecure for most restrictive preschool special education.



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are now there is almost eight years old. She's in second grade class and Jesuit school. Integrated class with typical viewers. She's beautiful.



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Now what would you like about your choice?



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He has a personality, she has conversation skills, there's still things that you need to work on. But for the most for the future, like from black, to now having possibilities, and none of that could have happened enough kind of



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hit the ground mind. So like to take action. And I can't say that I could do that forever. What I can tell them is I will have them feeling like I did it myself, are you looking at yourself in the mirror and saying, I was everything that could be for her today, I have no regrets. And whoever kept whatever happens happens. It's really for us as parents to know we've built the duty that we found us with what we had to show the best versions of ourselves to live to raise these children and help now hundreds of mothers coach and one on one to do the same things I did to help them come up with a plan will receive constant progress. This is what I want to do. I want to give you the chance to to



16:18

I want to give you every opportunity to give your child that



16:25

day.



16:37

Happy Birthday love.



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All right. So that's our little story in a nutshell. Hold on, we pull this back up here for you guys.





16:45


So to give you some cliff notes about Juliana, I'm sure a lot of you have probably had a very similar experience. Your child was born, they were developing Euro typically and something changed. She was born November of 2012. She was 39 weeks, nine pounds crowns very robust babies, I have robust children. And for the first year she hit all her milestones. And then some she said map at nine months really blew my mind, like her ability to understand and to even just start speaking at that young. And, you know, she went on to say mama dad, I go basic words. And then I'd say a little bit after her first day, around 13 months, I remember saying this to my mom, I'll never forget it. Like she seemed to be just pissed all the time. She was crying, unhappy. I remember saying well, I'm like, what happened? Am I weird? Am I happy baby go. And right around that same time, we all started noticing these OCD type traits where she would like, we'd walk on a cobblestone walkway, she'd have to stop and touch every brick. If we were in my mom's house. And she had this china closet with all of these knobs, she'd have to tap each of the knobs and she was lining up her toys she was she was drooling when she was eating and then all of a sudden, a bunch of excessive jewel came we couldn't go anywhere without a bib. Then she started to do this thing with her hands and spinning those toys. And you know, I was really kind of still in denial that this was something other than just her, you know, I'm like, Well, maybe she's just beaten your own drum, you know, I, you know, I just kind of had this idea that, you know, she's just going to develop in her own time. And then at the same time, this was probably right before she was she was going to be trying to in November. So I had already registered her for a nursery school program. And at that same time, you know, I was still feeling pressured from my family that something seemed off about her. She wasn't saying those words that she had, even before her first birthday. So I finally at that point called early intervention to come in. And she was about 20 months and 21 months, and they said she was too young to diagnose. I didn't even know what they meant diagnose her with what I had no idea. And at that time, they said, listen, we're just gonna give her like five days a week of, you know, five sessions a week of special ed fives five sessions a week of speech because she wasn't talking. And I was so kind of upset about the whole thing. And he said, Listen, if you don't see progress in the next couple of months by her two year old birthday, call me back and I'm thinking man, I'm like, I'm never calling you back. I don't feel like there's anything wrong with her. I feel like this just kind of opened Pandora's raw rock up Pandora's box. And you know, I just didn't feel like there'd be any, you know, like, why would they say that she's developing normally, I just kept thinking of it, like almost like a business, so ignorant to the belief, so ignorant to the idea that there are more children that needs services now than there are service providers to help them. At that time. I had no idea. And you know, I was still insistent that she go into this nursery school, even though she wasn't showing signs that she was ready. She I thought, you know, maybe just being with these other kids was going to make all the difference. And I remember the first day of orientation, we had to spend half the time there with the child just to kind of get them used to the room and then we all kind of like slowly left. On the first day I saw her surrounded by these other moms and kids.



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I could see, for the very first time, her, I guess, her peers and she looked very different. But still, I was like, Oh, she knows she's a November baby these kids are ready to. And she's going to be one going to into two into this program, I had every reason in the book, why she wasn't really doing what they were doing, they were kind of playing with the toys, she was kind of just sitting there, she was, you know, seemed like she just kept kind of running around the room,

she had not like, she wasn't interested in anything. She wasn't even acknowledging the presence of the other kids. But I was just No, I felt like I just at that point was still willfully ignoring the signs that, you know, she wasn't where she probably should be. And this was I'll never forget this, because this was at the Halloween parade for the class. And within a few weeks of her starting the school, I got the call that she wasn't

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trying not to get emotional, that she wasn't settling down. And when I dropped her off, and she cries, and it makes it hard for them to run the classroom. And they even asked me to go to the Halloween parade to help her because she wasn't listening. And she wasn't following directions. And she was crying a lot. I remember hiding

 21:14

behind her so that I wasn't in the picture with all these kids going, you know, on the parade. And, you know, they were acknowledging what my family was saying to me for months that, you know, she hasn't played with the toys, she's not following directions. And you know, at this point, I was still wanting to believe that she was going to develop at her own pace. And but it was becoming more difficult to ignore now that these people are saying this too. And at the same time, I my son was just born. And, you know, at this point, she's been in two months of early intervention, I'm not seeing any progress at all. I've got a lot going on in my head, I got a newborn. Now I've got this. And, you know, November comes around through second birthday, and she's still really not talking. And I ended up going to a wellness visit in December and the doctor and I started to talk and we everyone's saying she's behind, but you're looking at her right? She looks good, right? I'm still like fighting for the position that everything is fine, even though maybe deep down at that point. I knew it wasn't. He said, Well, she using 20 words with intent. And I said no. And he said when she's definitely behind, and it was just like, at that moment, for whatever reason. Yeah, I'm listening. And

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I never thought like, you know, I'd call that guy back into my house, you know, and I did. And

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I just knew that, at this point, for whatever reason, that moment, but that pediatrician just changed everything. And I was like, You know what, I can't deny this anymore, probably hurting her if something is wrong, she's not getting the help she needs. And she was diagnosed.

 22:53

December 2014.



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You know, over the next few weeks, I was just kind of in a tailspin. I was depressed, I was crying. I was



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grieving. Not a death. But like the death of the typical childhood I thought I was going to experience with her. It was definitely our darkest hours a family that really wasn't worried about her. It was worried about my son, because



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a psychologist was a cold fish. They said, What about my boy and he's like, you know, if you have one with autism, the there's a great chance that your second will also have it. So I was just inconsolable at this point. I remember one night, you know, just going through the motions of you know, feeding them, changing them take care of them and putting them to bed. And then they have that thought that I talked about the video that I'm going to tell him one day and who's going to care for her with her mother. And still had at that point, no clue what was gonna happen. But I knew if I stayed in this depressed state if I white flag and if I continued on this path of being completely checked out. My daughter's life finished. I couldn't stay here anymore. I promised when I was pregnant with her because I even thought I was gonna have a hard time getting pregnant I always said I was going to be the best mother I could be. Where did that promise go? It's almost like my bowels pick up broke my bowels. Because now something isn't going the way I planned. I don't show up the way I promised that I didn't want that to be my identity. You know, I'm a God fearing woman, I believe one day I'm going to die. And I'm going to be you know, I don't want to be judged. By putting my head in the sand with autism cane I have to show up for her no matter what the outcome would be show up as my best version like I promised before the diagnosis came. And that was just the spark that started the fire within me that it was a thought and I'm going to talk a lot about that today because we've talked about the lessons that she's taught me. And one of the things is just you know,



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when that happened that thought even though as scary as it was, helped me to be determined to give her everything I had no matter the outcome was inconsequential. It



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was for me, not for her. And I had no idea we would have the outcome that we did, I had no idea. I just said, Alright, we gotta get to work and whatever falls, it falls, but at least I could say if I died tomorrow, I gave it everything I had while I was here. And that's like the biggest like takeaway I want any family to have when they're thinking about their their children.



25:21

Okay, so the next part of my presentation I want to talk about is something that I truly believe in my core, it's something I thought about with Juliana, and something I teach in my master classes, it's this philosophy of every child on the autism spectrum needs the big three. And if they get the big three, their chances of living a life of independence increase greatly. And the first skill in the Big Three is communication, they have to be able to communicate. The second one is they can have problem behaviors, they gotta be no problem behaviors or mental problem behaviors so they can sit and attend and learn in school. And the third one is to have to be potty trained all of this we cover in my masterclass. And



26:02

one of the first lessons I teach there, and one of the first lessons this experience of having Juliana has taught me is that I have to have a powerful parent mindset. And that's Lesson number one, I want to go over with you today. And this is a screenshot from moving from the Matrix. It's 20 years ago, and there was a little kid in there look like little Buddha, and it looked like he was moving a spoon with his mind. And he tells us in the story in the movie, not to try and bend the spoon, that that's impossible instead to only realize the truth that there is no spoon, then you'll see this not the spoon that bends it's only yourself meaning your mind, I could start thinking differently. I can't change that autism is here. But I have full control over what I want to think about it. And that's where I changed for me in that moment. Meaning if I believe I can change this, if I believe I can change the thoughts I think about myself and my child with autism, I can change the outcome for my baby and my reality. And her reality. And the gift of and the pain of human beings is we can hear our own thoughts. As far as I know, we're the only species that can hear our own thoughts. And that's a gift and a curse. The curse of it is that most of us don't question any of the thoughts the brain presents us. And this is the thing the brain presents about. And this is scientifically proven 60,000 thoughts a day your brain presents to you most of them you're not going to hear. But when the ones you do hear are probably going to suck really bad. And it's not like the brain is a sadist, right? It's not like the brain is trying to make you feel bad. The brain's job isn't to elevate you or keep you happy or give you that thing that you want so much for your child with autism to be independent to speak to a pie tree, it wants to keep you safe. And the way it keeps you safe is it presents a lot of thoughts that keep you where you are now. And that could be raising a preverbal baby in diapers, because the brain knows that we can survive here. I know you don't love it. But I'm not here to give you things you love. I'm here to keep you alive. And that's how our brain operates. And that's the pain that comes is that we don't realize that we can get behind those thoughts or we could not. This isn't my quote but I love it. It says the quote was, the mind is like a furnace. You could either warm our house or burn it down. And this is where this is. But the gift of being a human being is that we can choose what thoughts we want to get behind. And what we want to toss and that would happen to me in that moment when I had that thought as scary as it was. It set me on fire. It got me into action for my baby. I you know, that's a thought I want to get behind even though even though it scared me. It was a thought I wanted to get behind because it was going to have me get out of my shit and get moving for my kid.



28:40

One of the thoughts I also have about myself is that I believe I'm an exception to the rule. I had a situation when I was in. When I was from kindergarten to middle school, I was bullied every single day. And I come home crying every day like wishing like I didn't go to the school or

wishing that somebody would come in and save me see that the injustice is that were being done and just take me and swooped me out of there like a superhero, like somebody that a superhero has exceptional powers, right? So I was always fascinated with the idea of being the exception to the rule or people that were the exception to the rules. And in middle school. I remember, it was what just as another day, another day at the office getting teased. And something happened in that moment. I had the normal thought I did. It's like, gosh, Doesn't anybody want to stop this? This is wrong, I shouldn't be treated like this. And then I had this thought, no one is coming. It has to be you. And for the first time my whole life I stood up to that bully. He never bothered me again. In fact, that was rarely ever bothered again after that incident. And I learned that I could save myself. I could be the exception to the rule. And that's what I taught myself in that moment. And then from middle school up until I had Juliana was starting to be very practiced in that belief about myself. I'd be the exception to the rule with work. I'd be the exception to the rule for school. I could be the exception to the rule at any time.



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any scenario. So when autism came, I had the same pain that you guys had that same knee jerk reaction. I saw it as this major disability. I knew Rain Man. That's all I knew about autism. But even with that fear, at that point in my life, I was practicing the belief that I could create the exception to the rule, I could be to the exception to the rule. And by extension, I believe my daughter, Juliana could be the exception to the rule, which by the way, are all thoughts, I just believe about myself. And I choose to believe these things about myself every day. And the clarity of having this experience being Juliana's mother, knowing that



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it came so clear to me that my identity of being this person to show up for her that was her most important person made or break where she was going to be in her life. And it's the reason she is where she is today. And I assumed all parents thought like us. So the first lesson I want to teach you is that if you have a child on the spectrum, you are the most important person in their lives, I need you to start thinking, not impossible. But what is possible. Everything, you need to start believing that out of the gate. And you have to have that belief no matter what anyone says to you. And when I got out of early intervention, we were doing early intervention for a year, and we went into the special education preschool world. And I met other parents and I thought they all thought like me, I thought they all thought that they could make things happen for their children. And I found out very quickly, that wasn't the case. And I'll never forget this, we were in a hot tub. And we went to a spa day, I encourage some of the moms and we were Juliana was in a 614. She was just to still sign languaging she was just starting to speak. And I encouraged some of the moms of the other kids in the 614, which is the most restrictive autism classroom, she could have been as let's go into spy you know, let's get a day off, you know, from being a being a mom. And there were two moms and they're talking about kick talking to lawyers and giving their house away to the state. So their kids would have a place to live when they died, or babies were three and four years old.



32:10

You can't think like this, when you think like this, this is what life will give you, I need you to

start believing anything is possible. You can't future chip trips can future trip a three year old into a group home.

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Because if you do that that's exactly what you're gonna get. So one of the first lessons I've learned is that the mind is so powerful. I've got to show up like the mother who believed anything was possible. The mother who was holding that child in her arms, the hospital, I believe anything was possible. Before autism came, why couldn't she live with autism and have an amazing life. We're gonna talk about that today too.

 32:50

Can't give any parent the path to pi training, communication or stopping problem behaviors. If you've already given up on a limitless future for your baby in your mind. You can't change anything if your child if you can't believe you can't create change for yourself. I've got to not only make you believe that it's possible that they can live an amazing life and have autism, but that you're capable of being the best teacher for them. Because you nobody knows them better than you. And you can't change that autism is here. But you can decide how you want to show up for yourself and your child. Only when you do that. Can you change the reality of for you and your baby?

 33:29

What are their thoughts about the big three right now? Where are you right now with your thoughts about the autism that your child has been diagnosed with? And what are your thoughts about them communicating? Not having prom behaviors and potty training? Do you think they're capable? Do you think you're capable of teaching them? Does autism mean diapers for life? In your mind? Does autism mean a child that will never communicate just autism in cancer to you?

 33:58

The number one reason stopping your child from getting the big three are your thoughts about the diagnosis.

 34:04

Your thoughts are creating your current results around the things that you want desperately for your child and I need you to start to the first lesson I could teach is to stop thinking shitty things because then you will get shitty results. I got just I need you to start looking at your child and believing in the things you know about them that are so good, that they're are so smart that they are capable and stop that leaning less than what the diagnosis means to you.



34:31

You're thinking needs to be setting yourself and your child up for success when it comes to potty training, communication and living an independent life. And one of the best thoughts if I can leave you with anything if you're not sure what to think you're like, Well, I don't even know what to take. Nobody's ever talked about this. This way before. If I could leave you with anything I want you to this is the thought I'm going to give you the thing. I want you to presume competence. When a child is pre verbal. I want you to think of any scenario throughout the day where they know exactly what you're saying. And that's what happened Juliana she learned how to do



35:00

The sign for cooking in a day, she had 10 signs within a week. And at that same time, all of that tantruming stopped, it was almost like a black cloud lifted, because she was able to use sign language to communicate. And her frustration instantly came down. And I was blown away. I was like, Oh my God, this whole time, she knew everything I was saying, it just blew my socks off. So if you need a thought, you need me to help you to give you a thought to get you moving in the right direction, presume competence, and come up with and think about what's going on in your daily life that you could show that yes, my child knows exactly what's going on here.



35:35

All thoughts that your brain presents to you are optional, you've never been told that now you know. And you get to choose the thinking you want to get behind to get new emotions, take new actions, and get the results you want for your child. And my program helps parents like you to think intentionally to get results you want for your child with autism. But all starts with a thought one thought can change the path for anybody at any time.



36:00

So that's my first lesson is autism champion power mindset, you start thinking about the way that you start thinking differently, start thinking more positively about your child, it's gonna change your whole world.



36:15

All right, so the second lesson that I learned from Giuliana, and is that autism is different, not less. And the way I think about it, and I took this, by the way from I think Temple Grandin had done a TED talk. And it was, I think it was called The world needs all kinds of minds. If you haven't watched, I would highly suggest it. And one of the things she talks about or her mother said this, I believe, was that she never saw autism as less for temple, she just saw it as different. And when the diagnosis came, I thought her life was over in mind, too. But I learned quickly that her first language was behavior, not only her, I believe that every species including the cat in the picture, every species, most primitive language is behavior. And if I can learn the language of behavior, I could teach my child anything. And that's kind of what happened with

Juliana, what at once I was able to understand like, she was fully comprehensive, she understood all of the things I was saying she just couldn't use her voice. We use behaviors to get her to want to communicate with her hands. She wanted the cookie I had to she had to make the sign with her hands for the cookie. And then I gave it to her. See how it's like very clear, there's no miscommunication here. It's not even a communication with our voice. It's the communication with our hands and our behaviors. That's why you can never go wrong with the cells, all children. Right. So what I always think, and this is the thought that I had, I was like, you know, what, what if autism is just an evolution of the brain? This is just a thought I want to believe because it's going to keep me motivated to helping like girl, posing this question keeps me in my power to be doing whatever it takes to help my child thrive. And one of the best things about this is I always tell my moms and like, you know, I always see autism, the way my daughter learns, it's very different than the way my son learns. Because my son is neurotypical, Juliana is on the spectrum. And I always say, like, you know, I feel like her brain just operates at a different frequency. And if you can learn to just communicate on that frequency, not only we'd be able to relate, you know, this communication with your child, you'll be able to teach them anything. And I believe like, what if it's possible that you can have autism and live an amazing life? And that was a great thought I gave myself a great question I posed I said, You know what, I'm going to get to work to create that. And that's what Julianne is going to represent when she's a grown because she's going to live an independent life.



38:35

I want all of you start believing that that's possible for your babies. And however the cards fall is not. It's not the point. The point is I need to show up in my power, doing everything I can. Like I promised myself before the diagnosis came as I was holding that baby in my arms at the hospital.



38:55

Alright, so the third lesson,



38:57

I hope you guys take will take it home with us today is that you are the most important asset to your child's development. I want to say that the autism journey that I've been on with my daughter, Juliana has made me a better mother. By far leaps and bounds. I always thought I was gonna be good mom, I had that identity, right? Because I had this thought, I'm gonna be good mom. I'm gonna we're going to do lots of things together. I'm going to make sure I teach them the important things. And then when autism came, I remember thinking like, well, I will actually it's gone, right? Oh, that's gone. And then I had that thought. And then I got right back on the horse. And I said, you know, once I was able to teach her, I was able to teach my son, I was able to use the same things that I taught with Juliana to my son, it made me a better mother. And I believed in myself that I could even though I don't have a special education degree, I've never been formally trained in ABA, that I could help my child better than anybody because nobody knew her like I did. And as a parent of a child with special needs, you have two



important jobs. The first one is you need to learn for yourself how to teach this baby nobody's around them more than you are. If you think you need to be a doctor or a therapist, a special education



40:00

One teacher a special education have a special education classroom to make a difference you couldn't be more wrong. You are the most valuable than any of them. No one knows your baby better than you know more no one in the world is more bested than the parent to help that baby thrive. The fact that has to be you.



40:20

The second thing is you're going to have to be able to withstand setbacks, hiccups, regression, you have to build up your tolerance for pain. If at Giuliana has taught me anything as the as it she's taught me my identity as a mother is I can take a lot of setbacks, I can take a lot of nose I can take a lot of pain. Doing this work is where the skill of taking blow after blow and during constant pain comes in. My ability to withstand door slammed in my face getting told no over and over. I can't tell you how many times I've had ideas that IEP meetings, I've had ideas for classroom placements, I was told no, I gotta get humiliated, I feel embarrassed, I feel take advantage of the worst type of shit any human beings can endure. I've taken it all many times. And when it came to feeling that pain for my girl, I was ready to weather the storm. And that's the only reason why Giuliana, she is where she is today. My ability to be willing to take those beatings and keep asking for more to like, get the results I wanted for her.



41:18

And here's the kicker even to this day, it doesn't hurt any less to get let down or things don't go my way or we have setbacks. She's 10 years old, we're about to hit puberty, it's gonna get really interesting around here, right?



41:29

I'm just used to doing this. And that's the reps that you need, you need to start getting into that identity of a parent that does not stop that I have the most valuable asset. And I've got to put in whatever I have to put in whatever resources to make this asset as strong as possible. And when you've had all those reps, and you've tried and failed so much, I understand that fails, aren't fails anymore. Don't think that way. And that's one of the biggest things, I want you all to take away. Everything that you've tried with your child to get them high to begin communicate to get them elevated, that hasn't worked or not fails, you learn something in life, it's no longer failing, they'll let you fail for an autism parent is quitting on their kids. I have the willingness to feel it all including the fails that are really learned. I'm learning that that didn't work, I need to try something else that didn't work, I need to try something else. More things I've done with Juliana haven't worked and have. And the reason why she is where she is today, because I'm the identity that I can take it all I can take it and keep getting up. I know how to get past them, I know that those things don't work, I'm gonna try something different. I'm not failing anymore.

In my mind, I'm either learning or I'm winning for her. And that's what I want you guys to take them to. So if I don't want you to think that I'm a unicorn, I get that a lot like oh Giuliana is different than my kid Juliana was diagnosed moderate to severe on the spectrum. Or, you know, I just don't think that this is possible. My child's not speaking we have actually a BCBA my program, who is a adult with autism who didn't speak till the age of seven. A BCBA is a teacher with a master's degree in ABA, he lives he got married, he speaks beautifully. This is what's possible for all children, his mother was refusing to give up on him. She refused to let go of the idea that he could live the life of her dreams. And I want you to think that too. And I just want to sign off with just sharing some, some testimonials from the moms that also have been able to change the trajectory for their kids.

 43:25

So I guess I wanted to start asking you what were your biggest struggles prior to joining the book. You know, I was going around and looking for organizations, I was looking for help. So I started looking up online. I really need somebody who's been through, there's no access to any kind of services over here in Ireland googling stuff and trying to find something like join because I had a three year old autistic son. So I knew I had to do something that I didn't know what to do. Everything seemed to be waitlisted or just not available to break it down to him. I had to have somebody break it down to me. And that really got me worried. It got my husband worried and thinking okay, we need to speak up. I think my biggest struggle was understanding their potential. I actually didn't know like I was kind of relying on just the speech therapists. I came in just feeling very helpless, very confused. What can I do?

 44:25

That I haven't already done, you know what, what will be the harm or can I lose before participating? We weren't making as much progress. It was slow progress. I believe that I found me on

 44:37

Instagram. She's very turned off by a lot of doctors and therapists and things. I went back and forth and I'm like, Okay, I'm like he's going to start on ABA therapy on like, on this day, and I told him that was my number one goal as everyone would be I wasn't really skeptical because of how many times I have talked about the standard one and I'm here

 45:00

Okay, she's, you know, artistic and you know, you qualify for a lot of services. And when I go and try to infer about the winner, you know, we can't, we can't surface her, I was looking for mall to really help my son. He is for nonverbal communication, social behaviors and potty training. Our son was like a year or two of potty training, who's four years old, he's autistic. And he had been hospitalized a couple of times because of potty training related issues. So he has

been tracking on a spectrum for some time. How do I get him talking? How do I get pooping into flooding? I have spent 10s of 1000s of dollars on recovering my son All right, so now like where are you now you and your child now that you joined the



45:48

doing really really well? I think they're ABA program here is is is wonderful. We got very lucky with that one word here or there you know what it was that he wanted, but not necessarily saying I want it would be Apple or this or that. And that is totally blossomed. You guys. Saved my family. Okay, so where I am now if we're I kind of know that I've been charged the changes in him. In less than two months. I think I've been like six weeks. Ill miraculous here the behaviors have decreased, the stemming has decreased the the listening to directions has increased. The language has increased one of those kids like you tell her, I'm so proud of you. She'll just say it over and you're really proud of me, right, Mommy? Oh, you're so proud. I'm not in the same place as I am right now. Confidence wise, and being hopeful that things can change and also so much grace in me myself, you know, I just, you know, set those goals for myself and cross them off. And, and you know, and once I did that, for me, turn my focus 100% And you know, and then I was able to get the work done. You helped me formulate the confidence in myself a real life and you're ready to really go for it. I would not have gotten through it. They went so much better than I ever could have imagined. You know, I started listening to tips for Michelle. He's doing so much better, more eye contact for sure. We're working on on topping. I'm saying some more. Yeah, I went really well. Like all again, the tips you guys gave me It's doesn't seem like this big impossible thing. I just been given something Sopwith chips. He's more verbal. Likely action. I'm so happy to be part of it. We never in a million years, thought that it would happen this early. He's making a lot more sounds. He's now at that point where he's no longer frustrated since you and all of the teachers that give me all of the the ideas and the strategies, you know, we all want our children to succeed. It's just been wonderful. Within a month.



48:07

She was trained because number one and number two is crazy verbal right now. He's very independent. He's now able to focus on something else. Would you recommend our programs to any moms or dads that are going through this? Right? Absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah, I would definitely refer anyone to this. Yes, definitely. You definitely you guys need to do this program. It'll change you guys and your child's life tremendously. And abortion, I do recommend that you learn something new. Definitely, definitely for Western cultural disclosure for at least four to six months, you and your team like help pull that out. It's amazing. You know, it's amazing what you guys do. I wish I'd done this earlier. Probably without, it's not, it's not too late. This program has allowed that.



49:00

Take this course, you know, do the one on ones. Listen and absorb everything that his team has to offer. You guys have a gift



49:09

in you're sharing it and that's me. So I will recommend to any but whoever is out there, it's been really quiet. It's been very bad. This is going to help you. You can learn through other parents experiences. Absolutely. And I have already been recommending champions for our children. It's It's amazing. I can't recommend the program enough. Just do it. Don't hold that. Just go all in your daughter or your son. And I promise we'll definitely see results.



49:42

I want to just end with this and saying that,



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you know,



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being you know, when autism came to us, I felt like I was cursed. And I was really angry with God. And then I remember like when I finally got back on the horse



50:00

All right, we gotta get back into work for her because we don't have to like each other. But we can.



50:06

We're running parallel here because you throw me some bones here. And then I remember believing, at some point that this



50:14

journey of being her mom was sent to me on purpose. So I can help heal my girl. And I can help other families do the same. And I'm very honored by that. I remember starting this and thinking, like, if I could help one child, you know, thrive, then I've done a good job. And we've helped more than that. So I'm really



50:34

having autism in my wife, no doubt, if I've learned anything from being in this is not only she has made me a better mother, to go mother to her better mother to her son, and a better human being to be able to help other families do the same. So I hope today was helpful, I got a

little emotional. If you want to work with me, if you want to just learn more about me, here's all of my information. And we have a free gift for everybody who came today. If you go to [championmoms.com](http://championmoms.com), forward slash Survival Guide, you sign up there, and I'm going to give you a free guide I created called the autism moms Survival Guide to any problem behaviors. And I'm honored to be able to offer that to everyone who watches this and comes out to the summit. It's my gift to you. I'm sending much love and prayers for all everyone.

 51:24

Michelle, thank you so much. That was a lovely presentation. And such an authentic presentation came from the heart and all the things you've learned from Juliana, very inspiring. So thank you, once again, thank you, thank you again, for having me, I need to get so emotional, but like, this is from the heart. This is me, I've lived the journey that everyone is watching this. I've lived your life. I know what it's like to walk in the shoes. And it is a it's it changed my life. I'm not gonna lie, it changed my life in a good way. I know you may not feel like that is some of you may be really struggling with this. But really, she made me a better human being by far.

 52:06

It's like realizing the strengths of of autism. A lot of the times you can you can focus on what you consider negatives, but it's just seeing the strengths, actually. And tapping into that. Yeah, so like I when I think about it, you know,

 52:24

she became like, I have this identity that I believe about myself, we talked a lot about thought or can that in that presentation that I'm a master problem solver, I can solve for anything, including, like, I remember she's now vocal, she has friends. One of our I think thinks that we are a work in progress with now or you know, age appropriate problems for any child with a side of autism. And one of the things that she still struggles with this picky eating, and her best friend invited her to her birthday party at a hibachi place and we've never been and she's very picky eater. And I was like, alright, you know, we're gonna everyone's gonna watch you tonight we get ready for the hibachi party over the weekend. And we I picked out everybody ordered different foods that she could try them. And at this point, it's become such a, it's been become such a bond because she understands to where she's like, where herbs from how autism affects her life, and that she understands that she can be a part of the problem solving for it as well, which I just think it's just been so amazing. It's enriched our relationship. And yes, being this master Problem Solver has made me stronger problem solved for potty training, problem solving communication problem solving for problem behaviors, if I feel like I can, the way I teach things is that how you learn what how you teach one thing is how you teach everything. So it's like a skill for the rest of your life. It's really amazing.

 53:43

You sort of started off your journey by saying that you were in denial for quite some time, and don't want to accept

don't want to accept



53:53

that your child might be on the spectrum. And at that stage not even knowing perhaps what



54:00

what was going on. Do you think it's common for parents in the beginning to feel that denial and



54:09

sort of not getting the help at that stage? Oh, yes, totally. I think nobody wants to believe there's something wrong. You know what I mean? I think it's just a you know, it's so fascinating. And everybody who has a child on the spectrum can understand that they can do some things beautifully. And then some things they can't even function and it just doesn't make any sense. How that could be less. And I think that's one of the biggest misconceptions about autism in the beginning is you feel like it's less I don't feel that way anymore. I'm like, what if this is a natural evolution of the mind? Like if I think about the X Men, right? And then it was that mutation? What if this is the mutation in the mind whether that's, it serves me to believe that because I show up in a way of like, Alright, I just got to learn to how to teach this new mind. And if I can learn how to teach this new mind one thing, I can learn how to just new mind anything, and that's kind of like, really caught fire for me that's helped me to show



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An in a very different way from her. So yeah, anything, anything different to what we are exposed to is going to be scary, and it's not what we're going to want. And, you know, this has been hard. We've had some we've taken some real face first hits, you know, there's lots of stuff that we did that didn't work. And there were a lot of disappointments and regression, I think one of the biggest things in our communities, we all think regression is death. And actually, regression is a part of life for all human beings. But what I want to just kind of like, take away from this year is just like, you know,



55:32

yes, it would be normal to deny it, but but at some point, we got to show up and be realistic. And I think what happened for me is that I kept getting slapped with, you know, get slapped in the face with a cold fish, because, you know, nursery school wasn't going well, the pediatrician was saying things I'm noticing, like, she seems really unhappy all the time. You know, at some point, you know, the evidence is gonna start to outweigh the the belief that I want to believe that something is isn't isn't, you know, going the way it should. And by doing like, going through that it was painful. And but like, it's a part of life, it's normal to for that to happen. But it's so important to get over that hump and start to like, get into action with what this is the

thing about grief, right? There's five stages of grief is the I have it up my wall denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. And I always try to push my parents to acceptance, most of them aren't here yet. And acceptance isn't sexy. It's not like I love this. I'm so embracing this, I'm happy. Sometimes it's like, Listen, this isn't right. This isn't fair. I don't understand why this happened to us. But it's what is. And one thing I believe one stage of grief that I don't think anyone talks about is once you get to exception accepting, you can get to what I believe is the sixth stage, which is creation, how can I make something beautiful from what I have?



56:51

But also, I think, Michelle, up and down journey, one day, you can you can come to the point of acceptance, as you've just said, and there are going to be days that you're going to feel beaten down again, by by life, and by things happening. How do you get yourself out of that rut? And is it sometimes okay to to, for a short amount of time? be stuck in that and then pick yourself up and go? Yeah, no, definitely there was a time when we were potty training her that she was going to swim lessons once a week in this pool that had other kids having swim lessons. And she was pooping in the pool for like five weeks in a row. And when a child poops in the pool, everyone's got to get out. They have to call anyone who's coming in for their next one, tell them not to come because they got to clean the pool. And she did this five weeks in a row. I thought by the fifth week, I know I could feel the stairs and I locked myself in the bathroom waiting for everybody leave and I cried. And I was like we're quitting swimming. We're never coming here again. And it's normal to life is 5050 It's going to be 50% pleasure and fun and wonder and 50% of pain and this hurt, you know, I just gotta quit. This is autism. I can't figure this out bubba. But yeah, you're gonna have those moments. And I think you have to just let yourself have you know, your cry, you know, I gotta have my cry, I gotta have this moment. And I was ready to quit not knowing. And I said, You know what, I gotta give myself space. And once I was able to like when we're in the, in the trenches, fighting these autism fires, or whatever it is, right? And she's pooping in the pool. And I'm trying to just, you know, get us out of here, like, alright, let's just quit. That's the easy route, right? But once I can kind of calm my nervous system down, I can always look at it from the aerial view. And if I'm in that identity that I talked about, and I work to be in that identity for years, right, that I'm a master problem solver. There's a reason she's doing this. How can I solve for this? So yeah, of course life is going to be 5050 You are going to hit some bumps and you're going to want to, you know, cry like a baby in your bed and that's fine. There's a lot but like, the journey does not stop you have to get back up and say okay, what can I learn from this and every time I've done that, I've had huge



59:02

elevations for her and for me, like what happened with that was I was like, Alright, I'm going in the pool with her next week, because I'll know better than the swim teacher, right, right about she's about to take a pool. And that's what we did was I saw it I pulled her out of the pool. I ran into the word wet. We're both wet running into the bathroom and she pooped in the potty and she never did that again. And she's on a swim team now that would have never happened and I went home and I cried and I liquids.





59:28

Wow, wow. What an inspiring story.



59:34

What I really loved about your story is that you will vulnerable and emotional and raw and not just present. The ups and successes, but really be real with parents out there that this is stuff and especially to not often parents might feel alone if they don't have a community around them. Do you think it is in



1:00:00

ortant in the autism community to have people who are so sincere and so authentic, that parents don't feel alone and families don't feel alone. Yeah, one of the biggest reasons I did I created my program is because I was alone doing this. And that one of the one of the most wonderful things about the autism community is that sense of community. When you come into a special education preschool for the first time or special education school, I always felt the rallying of support from other families with children with special needs. But then I also saw that it is a blessing, but it's also a curse, because I am in a mode of Yes, I'm here. I love this community. But I want to be a part of not just a community of yeah, this is me. Yeah, this is you but a community of problem solvers. Right? So yes, I love the idea of community, but I want healthy community. I want a community that's always going to be in support. They're up leveling my kids, I'm learning from her. She's learning from me, and we're always moving forward. You know, like one of the things I talked about, I'm so blown away. We I mean, our kids were in preschool, and they were talking about giving their homes away the state, you know, like, I'm a planner, I'll get me wrong. I love to plan. I like to think five steps ahead. I'm not planning my kid out my preschooler into into a group home or three or four. If I start putting my mind in that energy, that's exactly where universe is gonna take me. So yes, I love community, but I also want a community that's going to support me almost like accountability community, I like that, or what do you do it? Okay, what am I? Oh, that sounds good. I'm gonna try that too. You know what I mean? That kind of community. So yes, I love community.



1:01:33

Almost like a network of warriors helping us. I like that network of warriors. We call the tribe. I like that, too.



1:01:43

Michelle,



1:01:45

I feel like we can book the whole day.



 1:01:48

But we have to wrap things up here. What would you say? would be your main takeaway from this conversation? If there's a parent listening to this and six months from now, they think about your talk. What would that mean? Take away P. main takeaway, even in my masterclass, I say, you all come to me for all the tips to potty train to get your kids communicating to get them stuck on behavior. Tactical is 5% of the game 95% of it is our thoughts about the autism. And believing that it's a limiting thing, the me leaving, it's a death sentence. If you could walk away with anything from today, I want you to start believing in what's possible. Not what's autism is limiting your child's

 1:02:33

autism isn't like, oh, we consider in the coaching role. I look at autism as a circumstance. Maybe it's something beyond our control. It just is what it is. But it's not autism. That's the problem. It's our thoughts about it that are leading us to take shitty action, which is giving us making us feel awful, and we're getting bad results. If I can look at autism, like what if and this is I'll tell you what, Julianne in the beginning, I thought I could cure of it. And I was naive thought, but I thought I could cure it. But up until about kindergarten, I thought served me well. Because I was willing to try anything. I was motivated to term it. Once we had an incident happened and it kind of brought some realization to my mind that I think that we're going to always live with autism. It definitely took the wind out of my sails in that moment. And then I thought, what if you could have autism and live an amazing life. And I want our journey to show parents that that's possible. I want the families that have worked with me to be the example of what's possible. One of my mom's is a her daughter is reading and speaking, she's wrote a book. I mean, this is what's possible with autism in your life.

 1:03:37

Michelle, thank you so much. That was an absolutely wonderful talk. And I think a lot of parents are now jumping out of their seats. And getting into that mindset, what you what you spoke about. So thank you again. Thank you so much, Jasper for having me. It's been a pleasure.

 1:03:56

That was Michelle Rogers. She is the founder and CEO of champions for our children. And today she spoke to us about her own journey with her daughter Juliana and shared some of the lessons that she has learned in that journey. For those of you who have joined us a little bit late you can catch up on this session and there are many other sessions at the SCOTUS and parenting Summit. We'll see you there.

 1:04:25

Hey, autism parents. November is a special month around here because my daughter Juliana, the girl who inspires me inspires all of us is turning 11 And I want to celebrate this milestone with you in a big way. So keep your ears open for more information coming soon. On a special

with you in a big way. So keep your ears open for more information coming soon. On a special live training you