

# OurStoryPodcast

Sat, Oct 07, 2023 1:31AM 22:41

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

child, autism, love, potty training, started, families, parents, baby, problem, life, coaching, masterclass, foundational skills, acceptance, thought, behaviors, sign, therapists, build, program

## SPEAKERS

Michelle Rogers

---



Michelle Rogers 00:00

Hey there, my name is Michelle Rogers, and I'm an autism mom and life coach, I run the program champions for our children, which is a group coaching program for parents of children with autism, we solve for anything autism. And I have this personal philosophy about children with autism in the sense that if they have three life skills, I call them Michelle's big three, if they have these three life skills, they will have a significantly increased chance of life independence. And those three life skills are number one potty trained, we make sure they can use the toilet independently. The second one is communication skills, they gotta be able to communicate in an appropriate way. And the third is no problem behaviors or minimal problem behavior. So they can sit and attend and learn in school. And this is what my program is about. And it is inspired by my beautiful daughter, Juliana. She was diagnosed on the spectrum, month after her second birthday. I remember when it happened, that I kind of thought that her life was over. And I thought my life was over too. And the only thing I ever knew about autism at that point was that was Raymond really, and remains a movie from the 80s. It was with Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise. And he was institutionalized. And I thought that that was what was in store for us. And I was just devastated. And I had no idea what to do where to turn, I spent several months here kind of feeling bad about our situation. I felt grief, not that she had died. But grief of the typical childhood experience I thought we were going to have was lost and I had to really process that grief the same way you would process a grief for a death of a loved one in the sense of like, you know, there's five stages of grief, I believe denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and then acceptance. And most parents don't get to acceptance, we kind of stick stick around more in the bargaining, depression, anger kind of cycle. And we kind of just keep looping between those three emotions. And the thing about acceptance, and I tell my parents this too, for me, you know, it came when I had this thought one night after I put the babies to bed, and I searched and I'm gonna die one day, and I hope Who's going to care for her like me when I'm when I'm gone. And I got really something about that thought as scary as it was really got me out of my pain and step snapped me into action for her. And I was full steam ahead from that point on and I'm my acceptance moment really just came in that space. And I always say acceptance isn't sexy with my parents who say, you know, like, listen, it's not, you know, acceptance is just acknowledging like, Listen, this isn't right, and it isn't okay. And I didn't sign up for it. But it's what is. And I believe there's a sixth stage to grief processing that nobody ever talks about, which is creation, meaning like, from what is I can accept like this is, I can accept

that this is what it is. And I have no control over and this is the hand that I was dealt, what beautiful things can I create from this. And I think that's where a lot of parents get stuck. And I know that I was stuck there for a while until I was able to snap myself out of it and get to work to help my baby. So I remember the first one of the first things I did after she was diagnosed I was in front of my computer screen and I was Googling up a storm as to finding somebody like what I do today to guide me to tell me what are the things I need to do to make things right for her and I remember my mother in law coming in ask if I was gonna be alright. And I said no, I'm not right. This is fucked up for any other better word. And I don't know what to do. But you know what? She couldn't have a better mother. I remember saying that's her. I'm like, You know what, bring it autism. I don't know what what's going to happen or how this is going to shake out. But I still believed, even to this day that she just could not have a better mother to help her child through this. And that belief in myself really carried through and it helped me to take her from, she had language and last issue came completely free verbal to us teaching her with sign language. She learned her first sign of cookie, we use the more sign for cookie at the end of day one. And then she ended up learning 10 signs within that first week she potty trained with the sign this was the sign we used reply trainers to show shaking fist. And then she started to make sounds and then her sounds turned into Word approximation. She started vocal stimming which was exciting. She's a repeater. And then she started saying you know one word utterances and then started to talk and she went from the most restrictive special education preschool, which was a 614 was an autism class to a 12. One, two with some supports to eventually a private preschool placement to a integrated kindergarten through third grade and last year was her first year I was always anticipating if you don't know what Integrated is it's an inclusion class, where you have it's co taught. So you have a general education teacher and a special education teacher. And a handful of the children in the class have IEPs that need to be in an integrated classroom. And nobody knows who they have who has the IEPs. And you have to finish curriculum. So even though because there's gen ed kids in there as well, even though you have an IEP, you're still expected to finish curriculum. And I kind of envisioned that we would be in a inclusion setting for cheese probably for



Michelle Rogers 05:32

I'm thinking here, probably until middle schools what I had anticipated. And two years ago at her IEP meeting in the spring, they said, you know, Mrs. Rogers, I think I think she's ready to go into a general education class. I remember just like, I cried every IEP meeting, because they're just so emotional, but I'd actually gotten better at it. But I was the first time I cried a couple of years in it, because I just wasn't expecting it. And she has just really soared and has been doing things beyond the expectations I ever thought for I had no idea when I got back on the horse. And I said, alright, you know, listen, this ain't sexy, ain't riding ferrets, what is let's let's get on the horses give it everything I got, I had no idea that this was the potential outcome that we could have. And I'm so blessed to have had the ability to facilitate that. For her, I become her most important teacher, and this is what I try to teach all of the families I work with that you are their most important person. Nobody is more vested in this child winning more so than their parents, you know. So you may have doctors out there may you may think that know better than you and a teachers that may know better than you were therapists. It's all bullshit. Because at the end of the day, they're doing a job and you're living this life as the parent as his caregiver for the child. And your job now is more important than ever, we promised when we held these babies in our arms that we were going to show up in a certain way. And when autism comes, a lot of us just kind of let that fly out the window. And that sucks, can't have that our kids need us more now more than ever. And that was my, my promise. So when that happened when she actually was recommended for a gen ed class with minimal supports. I just

I couldn't believe it. I couldn't believe we were there. We were there quicker than I thought we were gonna be. And it's been an amazing ride. And now she is in her second year in a gen ed class. She's in fifth grade, one more year, and she'll be in middle school so crazy. And she's doing great. She's got friends, she has sleepovers. She has fights with them. She fights with her brother, she fights with me, she's got a personality, she's funny. She's all the things I never knew would be possible. And had I not gotten out of my own way. If I had not just said, Listen, you know, let's get to work here for her. I would have never seen this life that we're living now. And it's been a real dream come true for us. So when I was looking on the internet all those years ago, I was looking for somebody like me to help me and there was nobody. And I remember thinking, you know, I felt like she was cursed. When we got diagnosed. I felt like God had taken this beautiful gift and just wrecked it. And now I think as time went on, I said, Alright, listen, I gotta get to work, I got to help her. I think I kind of got to a point where I was like, listen, God, I don't need you to be my friend. But maybe you could just work in parallel with me. I don't know why you sent this to us, but we're just gonna deal with it. And I'm a God fearing woman. So this is what I'm thinking. And then I think as time went on, I started to see her improve and keep getting better and better. And then I came out to the community and I saw I met other families that were struggling with this. So I started coaching them on officially coaching them to help them with their babies. And I thought everyone thought like me, I thought everyone comes to has that come to Jesus moment. Where are they like, Alright, listen, you gotta get your head out of the couch cushion. Let's go. I don't want my will you know, if I'm at the gates of heaven, right? Oh, my God fearing woman, I want the gates of heaven. He's playing back my life. And the majority of it is my head in the sand because I didn't know what to do with this. That's not what I wanted to watch on my reel. So I didn't I thought every parent had that journey. And most don't most stay in the sadness, the anger the bargaining depression, they never get out of it. And I just started unofficially coaching parents like this for years now. And and I now think that this journey with Juliana was sent to me, not only just for me to heal my girl, but to also take what I learned and healing her and helping so many other families be able to do the same for their kids. So that's why I do what I do. And I've been running. I've been coaching for many years now. But I've been running my flagship product, which is the champions for our children masterclass. It's a group coaching program that guarantees results. We have a 100% success rate for potty training, a 100% success rate for building out communication skills. It's strictly group coaching for the parents, because like I said before, nobody is more is going to be more invested in seeing your child win more than you. So it has to be you and that's why I do this program. And it's just like, I feel like the reason I did I was like excuse if I can keep one kid out of a group home. I've done a good job and I know for the hundreds of families now that have come through that program that we You've done that over and over and over again. And now I believe like that journey of her being having autism and me solving for and helping her her thrive and live this wonderful life. And she will be independent one day that this was sent to me on purpose so that I could help her and then help so many other families struggling with the same things with it when they have the diagnosis, and they feel slayed, and they don't know how to get out of bed, and they don't know how to take one foot and put in front of the other. And that's why I do what I do. And that's why I run my program. So you know, we, in my program in the master class, we really specialize in all things autism. So it could be potty training, it could be communication, it could be problem behaviors, you name it, we cover it. And but like when I started this, I just said, Listen, I'm sure you guys are gonna bring stuff to me that I'd never saw for before. But just like I was telling you in my story, like I identified as a master Problem Solver with tears running down my face, I said she couldn't have a better mother. And I say to all my families, you may bring something to me that I've never solved for before. But I'm always up for the challenge. There's no problem I can't solve. And that's how I feel. And that's what I want to empower them to feel about themselves. So when I started this, I said help with anything autism, I was literally helping with IPS, I was

helping with getting insurance, finding people to do the insurance hours to now like very specific strategies to get their kids potty training, communicating, stopping their problem behaviors, picky eating, you name it. And it's just been a wonderful experience all around. And if I had to think about like, my favorite part of doing this job, let me think about this. I love seeing the pictures of the babies because you guys will share my families that work with me share pictures of their babies, and I love looking at their little faces. I love children, I absolutely am obsessed with them. I love their little squishy face, I would have like 10 kids if my husband was allowed to we went to though, but I get I get my baby fixed from helping all of these families and their babies. I guess one of the I think one of my favorite parts of my job is you guys surprising me. So like sometimes we'll get a baby in here. And it seemed like it was gonna take a while to pi train. And next thing you know, they get on that next call with me and they're like, hey, swipe, you know, Caden is potty trained official is like, why All righty. It was so fast. You guys surprised me. And I think that's one of the best parts of my job is to hear the weekly wins of the families that work in my master class. And they tell me how much better they feel and how much hope they have now. And before when they signed up. They were scared they didn't know what to do. And now they feel like they could slay anything. And every week we get wins. And it's so exciting even how many times I've heard wins. It's still like the first time I've heard a win. It's so exciting. I guess that's probably the best part of what I do. And you know, Juliana, my daughter's just the inspiration for this. And we were just trying to ask her lately, she has no idea what she wants to do when she grows up. And I asked her like, what do you want to do? You have like, you know, what do you know? What do you think you want to be a cop? Do you want to be a teacher? Do you want to be an engineer, you know, she's very, very about fair, like, right and wrong and all that nonsense. And she says I don't know. And I was like, well, maybe you'd want to work with mommy one day. And she's like, Yeah, maybe I'd like to do that. So she's really the muse for inspires me to do everything I do. And she makes every day interesting. And we love her. And sometimes she says that she thinks I'm harder on her than her brother. And her brother is very affectionate. And she doesn't really like to show affection in the same way. She doesn't want to be hugged or kissed or touch. It's not her preferred method of, of love. And I remember asking her one time about a year ago, like, Hey, listen, I know you don't really like to be loved and cuddled and kissed like Cody, but like, How can I show my love to you? And she said to me, very, very Giuliana, like, let me sleep in your bed. So we let her sleep in the bed. Sometimes I pick my battles. But if that's the way that she loves for me to show love to her, I do that. But it's so funny because she'll say to me, you know, I think that you love Cody more than me and I couldn't be if we don't have favorites and we love both of our children equally. But I'm like cheese here and I laugh when she says that because I'm like you child you have no idea. The blood I have. I have I have dripped for you the the sweat and the tears that I have put myself through to make you who you are today. There couldn't be that statement of me loving one child over you couldn't be so so much further from the truth. I am so vested in her winning and winning at life. It was just like, I laugh inside when she says that I'm like, Yeah, okay, I love coaching you more than you, I've bled for you. And so it's just been really



Michelle Rogers 14:33

it's been a really interesting journey. And I started doing this by sharing our story on social media and I guess that's how I started so I started a Facebook group and I said, Hey, everybody, I took my daughter she went from nonverbal to sign language to potty training with a sign to word attracts me she's speaking and now she's doing really well. And would you be interested in hearing our story and on people like Yeah, yeah, yeah. So I just start posting a little comment little blog post, video. Those clips just kind of sharing like our journey. And that's

really kind of how I created this presence on social media I've really built my company on being as authentic as I am with you now is, is I show up on social media, how I show up on a webinar, even how I show up on my coach. And I think there's something about that, that's very, I don't know how to explain it, I love it. Because I would I think there's a lot of fake and phony shit out there. And I like somebody who's who's real and tells it to me like it is. And I think it's one of my draws as a, as a coach. And as an autism mom, and I'm not going to sugarcoat it. Sometimes the work we do is going to be hard, you know, and sometimes as parents, we gotta teach the hard lessons. But I'm here to help you every step of the way. And I want you to win, I want your baby to win. When you join. When parents join my program is one of the things I say to all of them like, welcome, welcome to my family, because that baby yours now my baby too. And I want to see that baby thrive. I want to I want it just as much as you do. And I you know, I think that that comes through. And when I talk and when I when I tell stories, and when I do my podcast and everything I want you guys to know like there's nothing more important to me above all else, than to keep your baby advergrouphome. And if I can be a part of that journey. I mean, what a gift, I can't think of a better way to spend the rest of my life, helping as many families as I can to help their babies thrive. And this has just been it's been such a gift. And if I had to give everybody I guess if I had to give any advice to parents of children with autism today, one of my biggest things that we teach in the masterclass is that you are your child's most important asset. I've talked to so many families who kind of like lean on the doctors and the therapists and the experts to tell them what to do. And I remember walking out of the doctor's office appointment one time with her and it said something that he had a Google mug in the reception window and said, Don't mistake your Google search for my medical degree. And I had an inner laugh and I told the receptionist, I'm like, you can tell your doctor that he can't mistake his 120 minute lecture for me living this life with this child 24/7. And it really hit home for me is thinking about like how many times has a doctor a therapist, a teacher told us something and they were dead wrong. And one of the things I always tell my parents like when you join the masterclass, I don't want you to look at me, as your decision maker, I don't want you to look at me, like you've looked at all the doctors, therapists and teachers, up until this point, that's why you are where you are. Today, I want you to look at me as like a flashlight, I'm gonna give you advice, my coaches are gonna give you advice, and you're gonna come back, we're gonna get that mothers and fathers and grandmas and caretaker intuition that you let slide out the window when the autism diagnosis came. And we're getting that back for you. And you're gonna show up for your baby like you've never shown up before. And we want this and that's why I say like, my program is a gift, you may come in for very specific reasons, whether it be potty training, communication, or problem behavior. But you leave with so much more you leave with the identity of what I believe about myself is that I'm a master problem solver. Even though autism came into our life, and I knew shit about it. I didn't know anything about kids, she was my first I didn't know anything about special education, anything. I was already in the belief, I had spent so many years as this master problem solver, that I was going to figure this out. And when you leave my program, you feel like that, too. So if I could give anybody any advice is don't count yourself out. You are the most important person in your child's life. And you're the most you're the person that wants it the most. You want it more than anybody. So it's most, it's the most valuable for you to learn how to teach your baby, you can learn how to teach your baby, you can teach them anything. Okay. So I guess, my current goals, if I had to think about it, so now that's kind of like giving you a quick synopsis of our story and why I do this. My current goals is to reach as many families as I can I want to get the message out. We just started a podcast about two months ago. And I think it's doing really well. I don't know what the stats are like what a podcast supposed to do. But I feel like every week we have more and more downloads, and I think that's a good thing. That means I guess if they're downloading, they're listening. So I love all of that. I want to help as many families as possible. So that's my goal is to get as many families as I can to work with me to join the masterclass so

I can help them to help their babies. I want to improve quality of life. For as many families as I can, I want to make it within your touch now for your child to live that independent life you thought they would before the diagnosis came. And that's my number one goal. My other goal right now here is to create a new program that's going to be next level, I'm going to call it I think I'm gonna call like next level autism. So when you get your child the big three, you get them potty trained, you get them communicating, and you stop their problem behaviors. I want to take it to the next level, which is exactly what I did with Julia After I got her the basics, I got her the foundation skills. Now I want to build on that I want her to be able to go to a doctor's appointment and not have an issue with getting her teeth clean, I want her to be able to tie her shoes, I want her to be able to understand sarcasm, I want her to be able to advocate for herself. I want her to be able to put her earrings in like it could be anything right I want to build on those foundational skills. The foundational skills, believe it or not, are simple and application now not saying Easy, easy, something done without effort. Simple means that the actual steps to create potty training to create communication and create an environment where my child doesn't engage in problem behavior is actually the the steps to do that are easy to follow. But it requires commitment and consistency. And you really need that. Because once you get those skills, the next life skills, you're going to teach your baby which is going to be like my next level autism training, which I haven't launched yet, but I'm excited about it, is to take it to that next level like Okay, now that you've got the foundations, let's go. And the reason why you need the foundations before you can even get to any of that is because this next work is the hardest work I've ever done. I've had to put her in situations where I knew she would fail. I've had to put her in situations where I knew she'd be very upset She'd cry. And and it was hard for me as a parent, I've had to watch her struggle to do something that would take maybe her brother Cody 10 minutes to do and it takes her an hour and she's in tears the entire way. You can't do that work unless you've gotten the Big Three down. I'll tell you that right now. And you need the big three to be able to build on them. So that's what that program is going to be about. And I think that's what my future is going to be about. And I'm very excited to I'm still gonna always offer the masterclass because I love tackling the foundational skills that every child on the spectrum needs for a chance to live independence. But I want to take it to the next level. And I think that's my goal for the future. And yeah, so that's my story. In a nutshell. I want to get my message out to as many families I want to get it out to the community. I want to just, you know, spread the word that that autism isn't a death sentence that your child can live an amazing life and have autism and it's okay and I want to work with I want to work with agencies. I want to work with school districts. I want to work with so many different people to get that message out and most importantly, work with my parents because they are the gatekeepers to the progress that they so desperately want for their children. I want them to know that they have everything they need. I'm just gonna go give them the flashlight shown the way. So I appreciate you listening, and I hope this was valuable. And hit me up. Let me know what you think. And I look forward to speaking to you soon. Bye, everyone.