

Ep25 - Non Verbal vs Pre Verba...Language you use is EVERYTHING

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SPEAKERS

Michelle Rogers



Michelle Rogers 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.



Michelle Rogers 00:24

Parents, Michelle, here and today, I wanted to talk to you about the difference between nonverbal and reverse. Okay, so about a couple months ago, I had written a post that was in a Facebook group, and it was like this and it said, can I just say I'm not loving the word nonverbal. When my daughter was described this way, the word felt so final, so unchangeable, like a dead end. I believe that communication is just as important as verbal language. And we have to work on this before we can hear them speak. So I like pre verbal, so much more. I'm super intentional on language, because I don't want shitty labels to deter how I show up for my kid. And I feel like that kept us motivated because my pre verbal girl went from sign language to making sounds to word approximations, to repeating to a happy, chatty, 11 year old. That's now in a fifth grade general education class with normal supports. Let's use words and empower what's possible in our babies. Pre verbal tamiment language is coming who's with me? And I got over 100 comments, I would say a mixed bag of people like yes, I just love this Babu, Abba. And then I had the rest of them that absolutely fucking hated it. They said, You know, I don't think it's negative to think nonverbal versus, you know, why is that such a problem. And this was a group that kind of like labeled themselves as a group for parents of children that are nonverbal. And here's the thing, like, I love to talk in the sense of language, like, we work on all the tactical things to get a child communicating, and what the first thing I want to just really stress is that B being having the ability to functionally communicate, and being verbal, are not the same things. And that's a good thing for us parents of children with autism, because vocal language doesn't necessarily come as easy to our babies as it does a neurotypical child. So always imagined, on one end of the spectrum, there's the Thought

Bubble, right. And on the other end of the spectrum, is the ability to talk and in between the two is a neural pathway that brings thought out into your voice. And for a child that isn't on the spectrum, this is really easy, right? Because they can learn how to communicate verbally through osmosis, right? They can hear it in their environment, they can hear me talking, they can hear people talking on TV, and that's enough to stimulate that neural pathway to get verbal language flowing. But our babies on the spectrum, they just need a little extra support, that neural pathway is kind of more asleep for them, than I would say, a neurotypical baby. So what we do is we work on a way for them to communicate not, I don't want to say nonverbal, because we're trying to hold the whole point of this podcast is to really hit home the different that why language of how we talk about our child is so important. But when I say it, I'm saying like a, a, before verbal language, right? The most the primitive behavior, they are the primitive language of all humans, and I would even venture to say all species is behavior. So if I'm speaking in behavior, what if we could find a functional way for our babies on the spectrum and this and they're included in that too, right? So if there are primitive language for all species, including human beings, and including children that are on the autism spectrum is behavior, then what if we could find a functional way for them to communicate in behavior that will stimulate the wake up that neural pathway between between thought and vocal language and that's what we do in my program. But before I we can really look at the tactical I really got to think about when parents come to me what their beliefs are about their child, being able to one day have vocal language, right? And I believe mindset is 95% of the game. So if I'm talking to a parent, and they're telling me well, you know, and this was just I've had this happens all the time, but I just had a father a couple of days ago that I spoke to, and he was interested in his child learning how to, to talk because she hurt her toe and she couldn't. She couldn't tell anybody that she had hurt her toe and they saw it after the fact. And it really broke his heart that she couldn't tell him that, that that when she hurt her toe that, you know, she he found out after the fact because she couldn't communicate with that, and that broke his heart. But it also, in his mind solidified the belief that I don't know if language will ever come. So if I'm telling you listen, I have this systematic way to get a child that's pre verbal to be verbal, and we're going to teach them how to speak through behavior first, and then that's going to stimulate that neural pathway to get them communicating. And here's all the steps are going to do. But if I'm already in a defeated mindset, if I'm already thinking that my child is nonverbal, right, this is how parents a lot, the other 50% of the parents who respond to that post, absolutely fucking hated it, because they're already set on the belief that their child will never speak. And that's really what I want to hit home today. And I'm not saying that all parents that think not will call, you know, describe their children as nonverbal think that they won't ever talk. It's just for me, though, it feels like there's so many other better words to describe your child if you really believed otherwise. Right? And I always say, you know, I'll talk to parents, I'll say, okay, what are you working on? They're like, Oh, we want to work on communication. Great. Well, yeah, I have a nonverbal five year old, nonverbal, 13 year old and I'll say, okay, and then I'll ask some probing questions. I'll say, okay. Do they make sense? Yeah, they make sense. Okay. Do they say words? In some instances, they do say words, and but maybe they're not functional. But then some instances, they do, say functional words, but the parents are still describing them. As non verbal, do you get where I'm going with this here. So like, as long as I'm thinking in the in the context of nonverbal, I'm thinking a child that can't communicate verbally at all. And that's not the case. And most of the the examples that I think of and I want you to think about the language, not just about describing your child on the spectrum is nonverbal, but what to saying that do to your mind, right, if I desperately want my child to talk, but I'm describing him in a way that makes it feel like talking is never going to happen. No matter what golden tactical steps I give you to get your child verbal, right? You're not going to be vested in it, you're going to have asked the



Michelle Rogers 07:20

the attempt to do it at best, because you're not even sure like it's almost like failing before you've even started because you don't really believe it's possible for change anyway. And and it's not just with the with the adjective of nonverbal, I want to think about anything. Any descriptor, right? Any descriptor that's going to help me like to make me think I'm stuck. I could have a parent that says My child is not potty trained, but their pee train, and they're not poop trained. So why would we say that they're just not potty trained, right? It's such a blanket statement and almost like shit cans, the progress you've made to have P trained right? It's not uncommon. I don't know why it's not talked about enough. But it's not uncommon for a child any child to get pee on lock first and poop to take longer. My neurotypical son, potty trained pee, I'd say within a couple of weeks, we had a more on lock with pee. And it took us months to move trade. And one of the reasons it took us months was because we weren't getting poop on a regular basis, even to this day, he still doesn't mind me putting them on blast, and he doesn't poop every day. But if I thought that whole entire time that I just have a child that's just get in diapers, and all they do is just they're just nothing's going to change. And I think about this child like a baby that that doesn't have this important skill. When I'm trying to teach it or I'm trying to stay on course and try lots of different things to get it done. I'm going to be less likely to see it through if I've already speaking in language that has us defeated before we've even started. And nonverbal is one of those big ones. Now I'm guilty of this too. I've used nonverbal, intentionally unintentionally. I've used it in. I've used it in my marketing material, because it's such a widely known way to describe children on the spectrum with communication barriers. I like even communication barrier because that's a barrier can break right. But when I say non verbal, it feels final it feels unchangeable. And when I'm thinking that I'm trying to change something that feels final, and it's describing. Right, then how successful am I going to be with that? So I really just wanted to hit home today that it's not just about verbal nonverbal, potty train, you know, pee, train, poop, train, whatever the case may be. It's how are we describing our children? And are we describing them in a way that's not helping us help them move forward? And if 95% of the game is mindset, and I'm describing my child in a way that feels permanent, how am I going to create change for that child? How are we going to create change in our lives? And I have to like reverse engineer a lot of the expense For instance I had with my daughter because she had language. I guess this would be a great description of nonverbal image. But this is the thing I never described her this way. She had language she could say map by shoe, Dora the Explorer was her most favorite cartoon. So she could say map. She could say boots. She could even try and say Durga, right, she could say it all, say mama data, and then she lost it. Right. So in the context of how people describe what quote, unquote, nonverbal is, she would have been nonverbal. And we had to teach her again to communicate. And we didn't go straight to communication through language, we did communication through through sign language through, we tried pecs first, and that didn't work. And then we did sign language. And these were the ways that we were able to teach her how to communicate verbally, again. So but during that whole process, which I think is so fascinating, as I think back to our journey with this, I never considered her. I never considered her I never described her as nonverbal. I always thought I was going to get her to talk again. And I didn't know this back then. Right? Because I was just a lowly mom, she was my first I hadn't, you know, um, you know, I've gotten seasoned I don't call myself seasoned at this point. I'm seasoned in this world. Now, at this point, I would describe her now, when I think back of it, I never described her that way. I always just kind of thought that, in my mind, she had language, right? She had Dora she had like, some animal sounds, she had mama dad, and she had math, right. I and she didn't have it, I believed in my head. And this is where the mindset piece comes in for everybody here. I believed in my head, she had that once. She can have that again. Now I know

anything about behavioral therapy or studies done on behaviors. But it has been confirmed because I have behavior therapists that work under me that that belief was correct in the sense of study show that if somebody exhibits a behavior, including vocal language and loses it, that means that they will they have the functional ability to get that back. And that's what I was banking on. And that was the thought I had in my head. Not that oh, my gosh, I had a baby that talk that now doesn't talk, oh, my gosh, you know, she was saying words, and now she's not. And now I'll never get that back. I just said, you know, something went off the rail a little bit. And I've got to figure out how to write her ship. I'm kind of how can I bring her back. And I think that's just been the biggest piece for me. In creating this, this program, where I'm working with all of these parents is that like, listen, I can give you all the tactical tips to the moon and back to get your vote, you know, get your, you know, pre verbal child communicating, right? But if you don't believe it's possible, and your language is, is making it feel like it's not possible, no matter how fabulous, my protocol is to get your child vocal, it's not going to work. It's never going to land because it's the belief isn't there? It's like trying to build a house on sand. So how do you do that? So basically, you know, I have another podcast, you can go back and find about, about the protocol of how you get a pre verbal Child speaking. But I really just wanted to hit home today that how would you go about like, what were the first steps that you would need to do? If you wanted your pre verbal child to start talking? Well, the first thing is to not not look at them as if they're incapable of language, not describe them in a way that makes them incapable of language. My daughter, I never thought that and when she made her first sign for Cookie, I'll never forget it. We worked all day. I had cookies everywhere. She was eating cookies out the wazoo all day working until finally she put her two little fingers or two little hands together to make the sign for cookie. And we use the more sign for cookie. I'll never forget when I put her to bed that night, it was so excited. Well, I could kept thinking was, I can't wait till she says I love you, Mommy. I can't wait to hear mommy again. And with intent, right? See, like sealed, so interesting. So it's not just the way I describe her. It's not the way I talk to her about talking about her to her father, or to doctors, or to my friends, right are two teachers. It's how I envision her in the future as well. And I'm going to do another podcast talking about like, you know, the self concept of a champion parent, like what I had to believe about myself that could create the results that we have, together as a family and for Juliana. But one of the first things I did before above anything else was just envision what it would be like that that day was coming. And as I identify as a master problem solver, there was no way that I wasn't going to get that day. So I like to keep my little podcast short and sweet. I want you to really think about I guess like how are you showing up with your child with autism today? Are you just assuming, by the way you describe them even though you desperately want change even though you desperately want them to be communicating and potty training? Are you describing them as a child that would be capable of that change? Do you believe that child you describe is capable of that change? I think one of the best exercises you could do with this, and I've never had anybody do this, but I could just see myself doing this is right, like a quick paragraph about your child. And right, and I want you to just describe them, describe them as to why they can't do it. Right. Why? Why it feels like this would be impossible. And then I want you to write another quick paragraph and describe why it is possible. We're all on the roof. What are all the reasons the proof that you have that they actually can do it? And then you'll actually see in your mind that there's dueling beliefs, right? There's the belief that I know that they can do this. And I've seen things other things they can do. I always say to my parents, if they could work an iPad, they can flush your toilet, right? What is the proof that your child can communicate? Right? If my child can script a Miss Rachel episode, right? But doesn't speak to me? Isn't that child? It's not about a fine, you know, there's the need for speech therapy most of the time is like, well, I you know, I only have the fine motor movements to create words. But if I hear my child scripting an episode, but they're not talking to me, that means that I can convert that that scripting to actual conversation with me. And I just need to find the how do

you see what I'm saying? So I want you to look at those two paragraphs and see all the reasons why you don't think it's going to happen. And all the reasons why you think it can happen. And create your bridge, right? You know how we talked about the thought, the thought bubble on one end, and the speech and the actual talking on the other end, there's a little bridge between the two that make them come together, create a bridge of belief from where you are, to where you know that they can be. And that bridge is going to be the first steps on how you get your child there. So I hope this was helpful. Let me know if you have any questions and I'll talk to you soon.



Michelle Rogers 17:05

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