

Matt (host): Welcome back to Nimble Youth, the podcast where we explore the emotional lives of children and teens and give parents practical tools to support their mental health. I'm your host, Matt Buttermann. If you're a parent of a teenager, you've probably had this conversation. How was your day? Good.

What did you do? Nothing. And somehow, that's where it ends. Communication between parents and teens can feel like one of the most frustrating and most important challenges in family life. Research and clinical experience show that strong parent child communication is one of the most protective factors for adolescent mental health.

Yet it's also one of the hardest to get right. Today's guest has built his career around helping families bridge that gap. My guest is Doctor. Jerry Weichman, Ph. D.

He is a clinical psychologist, adolescent specialist, and parenting expert with nearly three decades of experience. He is the author of *How to Deal*, the *Teen Survival Guide*, and founder of the Weichman Clinic in Costa Mesa, California and its Teen Brain Program, one of the most comprehensive cognitive and psychological evaluations for kids and adolescents. He is also on staff at Hoag Hospital's Neurosciences Institute in Newport Beach, California. Doctor. Weichman's practical insights have helped more than 6,500 families by focusing on empowering parents with proven tools to help their teens navigate real world challenges from academic pressures and digital overload to stress, depression, and burnout.

And after two years of development, Doctor. Jerry recently launched *Raising Families*, a free resource hub that provides an actionable perspective and practical tools that work for families struggling with low energy or stress. Father to an elementary, middle and high schooler, he is passionate about helping parents model resilience for their kids. Doctor. Weichman, welcome to Nimble Youth.

Dr. Jerry Weichman: Doctor. Thank you so much for having me.

Matt (host): Doctor. You bet. So, let's start with a question every parent asks. Why do teenagers seem so unwilling to talk to their parents

Dr. Jerry Weichman: at times? Yeah. Well, that's a great question and obviously I hear that a lot. I think what we have to do is actually look at it from their perspective from the minute they wake up. Because from a developmental standpoint, their brains are not wired to wake up at the time that school starts.

So it would be similar to you or I waking up at three in the morning and trying to have a good attitude and move quickly and eat food while and communicate. I always tell parents give your kids a lot of grace in the morning. It's really challenging because they have to do that five days a week, but then they get to school. And so you're not going get a lot of your kid out of your kids in the morning. Then they get to school and they've got challenging classes.

A lot of these kids have after school programs and sports. And so when they come into your home, they are tired, they're exhausted and they still have a lot to do. Their mind is they're not just fatigued, but their mind is also not just thinking about the amount of work that they have to do that needs to be done tonight, but they're also fighting themselves because all they really want to do is relax and be on their phone that calls to them. You're not going to get the best version of your kid in a lot of those time windows. And that's the reason why.

Matt (host): Yeah. Yeah, it's interesting because on the surface, teens can seem very, you know, distant or disengaged or engaged with their screen, but you said that deep down they still want this connection with their parents, right? It's maybe not right on the surface, but it's in there. Right?

Dr. Jerry Weichman: Absolutely. I mean, think about it as an adult, whether you had a good childhood or a bad childhood, whether your parents are dead or alive, there's a part of you as an adult that needs your mom or your dad at this stage of your life right now. It's like that times a thousand for these kids.

Matt (host): Absolutely. Absolutely. So one of your key insights is that when we talk to teens matters just as much as what we say and many parents start asking questions the moment their child walks in the door from school but that may actually shut the communication down. What are some things that parents should understand about timing?

Dr. Jerry Weichman: Yeah, so that's a great question. Our kids live in two completely separate worlds. They've got their school life where they've got drama and friends and pressure and academic stress and athletics and then they've got their home life and they're vastly different. And because we're so busy as parents, what we'll often do is we don't have a lot of time and we don't have a lot of time with our kids. We try to take advantage of the minute we get our kids back in front of us to check-in and try to figure out what's going on, which is, which is well intended.

What parents have to understand here is that for your son or daughter returning, opening the door to the car or to the home to come back in and you start hitting up with how was your day? How was your test? How was this? How was that? It feels like a bunch of hands coming out and grabbing at them.

Their natural response is going to be to pull back and close the door. And we know what this actually feels like as adults, because if you ever come home from work or been out with friends and the minute you open the door, everybody bomb rushes you and says, you know, she did this, he did this, we can't find this. Everybody's just, woah, woah, me go change my clothes, put my mom or dad hat, and I'll be down to help you out in about five minutes. Right? That's every day for your kids.

So your timing is really important. I always advise and what I try to practice myself with my kids is the minute they come in, I smile at them and I say, Hey, good to see you today. Missed you. And then be quiet. If you're in a car ride, there's an opportunity for the kids to talk or not talk.

Worry if they're not talking, they need transitional time as we do. I say, give your kids a minimum of forty five minutes to an hour to transition in back home before you actually approach them. Yes. What, how was your day today? Instead of, you know, instead of how was your day?

Actually, that's the common one. They say good. It's tell me about your day. And they're sick. They're probably gonna say it's good.

Right? Right. So what I've realized with the kids is is the conversation along the lines of, hey, look, give me the high point, low point, throw me a bone here. I'll leave you alone. Or the gauge of a thumb, a thumb going up at 12:00 and down to 06:00.

How was your day when you're moving your thumb up or down? It's really interesting. My kids, the kids I work with, they will be so much more accurate in their thumb gauge just because they don't really have to put much behind it. And it's more of a true reading. Right.

That's another way to get a gauge on your kid. And another sweet spot interestingly is bedtime. Bedtime's a big sweet spot because all the stuff that we talked about from the morning to the afternoon, the evening, And they've also done their work. They're they're on their devices. They've had time to relax.

And now the devices go away from a neurodevelopmental standpoint, they're not wired to go to bed. They're wired to go to bed later anyway. So they still have a little energy and they're still up, but also all the distractions are now completely gone, the good and the bad distractions. And what's left is these thoughts and these feelings that have been compressed to the back of their mind that now jumped to the forefront. And it provides you an opportunity if you can lay in bed or just exist in the room with your kid when they're getting ready to go to bed.

And a lot of these kids will start to fill up that empty space with things that are going on. And even if they're not, that gives you another opportunity to say, Hey, how was your day? Give me the high points or low points. What's something that made you feel this today? And you'll get more of your kids if you're, if you're strategic with when you're engaging them.

Matt (host): Yeah. Yeah. Certainly from my experience as a parent, sometimes that presence, but that, you know, the non threatening presence, just presence, I'm here for you, you can talk or, or you cannot, but, but I'm here for you

Dr. Jerry Weichman: You know, something else that communicates so much more than anything that you would or could say is actually physical touch. Right. So hugging your kids. Yep. Don't let your kids go, get off of me.

You know, just, Hey, sorry. Love you so much. This is how it's going to be until you go. But even simply putting your hand on your kid's shoulder for a second and a half as they walk by without saying a word communicates to them instantaneously, I'm here for you, I've got you, I love you. Right.

Matt (host): Absolutely. Yeah. Couldn't agree more. So, sometimes, and often without realizing it, parents can turn conversations into interrogations like, you know, how was your test? Did you do your homework?

And, you know, what how was practice? And then when they when they get those questions, those interrogations, they kind of shut down. So what's the difference between questioning a teen and actually connecting with?

Dr. Jerry Weichman: Yeah, well, we got to factor into the fact that the kids themselves, they care, even the ones that don't care, care, about where they're at academically, where things are at socially, where things are at athletic in all these areas. And so anytime you're coming to them with a question about one of those areas, it's usually repeated question. So it's usually a daily thing that's engaged because it's something that you care about as a parent and also that their kids, the kids themselves are navigating. But if it's not going well and or if it's a source of stress for them, you coming in and talking and just hitting the same boxes all the time is like holding a mirror for them. So not only is it annoying that we do this every day.

It's also, you're showing me more stress and I'm, you're stressing me out right now. So to me, that's not, that's not connecting. And if you, there's a difference between connecting and questioning, right? So it depends on what the issue is. I think that our kids need a wider lane to navigate their lives with.

I think if our ultimate goal is to get them ready for life, they need the freedom to navigate it. They need the freedom to make mistakes. And cause you learn so much more from your mistakes than you do from your successes. And so I think, you know, it's, it's a much wider lane. It's not a track that we're, we have to keep our kids on.

Our job is to allow our kids to navigate it and learn and change and grow and learn how to prop themselves up. This is the whole teach a man to fish analogy, right? Yep. And cause that's what we really want. If we really do care about our kids, it's, it's helping them to get to that point and have the tools and the skill sets to get there.

So that's one thing. The second thing is, is I think that the best way to approach kids is with curiosity, right? Especially if it's something that isn't good. A little or preteen hit their younger sibling or they really bomb something. I think part of what needs to happen is this is more about why, like, Hey, I don't care that you did this or this happened.

Like, it's just, I just want to understand why. You can help me with that, I'll leave you alone for the rest of the day. Right. Because if you approach your kids with curiosity, then they don't feel like they're, you're coming at them and I have to defend myself. I have to lie.

I have to minimize. I have to omit just to protect myself from this experience. You're actually going to be able to open up communication lines, get a better understanding of what's happening and have an opportunity to talk about what the actions are to fix the problem, because that's where we typically go wrong. Raising our kids is we're either, we're either creating the fix for them or we're just chastising them for the mistakes that they make. But really, you can get curious, understand what the problem was, and then help your kids with the actions and the tools to fix the problem.

Now they're learning not just how to navigate that situation for the future, but you're getting them ready for life.

Matt (host): Right. And you're, you're not, you're not controlling their responses. You're allowing them to, to make responses, but, but you're not, you know, they don't have the expectation that you want a certain answer. Right? I mean, I think for parents, have

Dr. Jerry Weichman: to understand that, look, we struggle and we get really frustrated as our kids do because of control. I mean, the only thing that we can't control is how we react and respond to the effort we put in the things that we do. And when it's your kid, I mean, biggest challenges as a parent I've found so far are going to be not the, it's going to be the people closest to you because they're in your circle. Your heart is open to them. And so they're going to activate you a lot quicker, But parents really have to be mindful of the fact that when it's all said and done your kid is the one behind the wheel of their car.

You can't drive it for them and your attempt to is gonna degrade your relationship and you're gonna lose your ability to connect and communicate.

Matt (host): Absolutely. Yeah. So you also emphasize the importance of one on one time with kids, even when they act like they don't want it. And so why is one on one time so important?

Dr. Jerry Weichman: Well, like I said earlier, you know, they have a major need, but they don't want to spend that time. There's a lot of things they'd prefer to do, but at their core, there's a major need there to have that connection. So you're going to get a lot of flack and a lot of pushback. And really, as a parent, got to fight for time with your kids, which is, Hey, I'm a big proponent of meals. Let's go out to them.

Let's go get lunch. Everybody's got to eat. Right? So let's go to lunch. Let's go to dinner.

Let's go to, let's go to breakfast before school. Your kid's probably going to push back and say, no, I got this. I've got, if it's not coming from a valid place, then you just keep pushing and say like, Hey, I'm sorry. I love you so much. Let's go.

If it is coming from a valid place of I've got a study, I've got, I have the study group, then you say, all right, we'll tell you what, let's find a plot, a spot on the calendar for this week or next week. I'm not going to leave your room until we put something on. Hey, sorry. Love you so much is always your excuse. Right?

Matt (host): Yeah, exactly.

Dr. Jerry Weichman: But when you do get out and you do get out with your kids, so many parents just want to just jump on trying to facilitate the conversation. And all you're doing is making the whole thing backfire. Cause it's typically, how is this good? How is this fine? How is this?

It was all right. And it's an awkward fifty nine more minutes of that meal. Right. So if you have technological rules of, Hey, we don't have phones at the dinner table when we're out at meals together. You have that in place, then you can create anywhere between thirty seconds and a couple of minutes of what I call uncomfortable silence, which is you just sitting across from your kid and having a little smile on your face.

And if they look at you and go, why are looking at me like that? Why are you smiling? It's like, just, I'm so happy to be out with my son or daughter and then be quiet. This generation is so overstimulated. They cannot stand downtime.

And it is, was so much more uncomfortable and awkward for them than it is for us. So if you create that space, oftentimes things that you've wanted to hear about will actually come out of your kid. So I have this friend and as long as you don't go in pounce on the first thing that you hear as a parent, and then try to teach them a life lesson about that. That's a response cost for your kid. I gave you this, you give me this in return.

Now I'm going to shut back down again. Right. This is like coaxing a turtle out of its shell, especially if your kid is not a talker. So you have to sit there and play this game. No way.

That's crazy. What do you think about that? And then be quiet. If there's something that you hear that you really want to weigh in on, you can offer that up. Hey, I'd love to weigh in on this.

Would that be okay with you? Or you can do it after the meal later on. But what you don't want to do is have your kid tell you about let's say a friend or someone they're interested in and then for days on end as a communication starter go hey how are things with Lauren? Hey did you see Lauren today? How did things you know you're do not do that.

Just keep pumping your kids for info because the more you do that, the more comes out, the more comfortable they are and the more comes out. And then you're getting a lot more over a long period of time of what you've always been looking for.

Matt (host): Yeah, absolutely. And that's one of my favorite ideas of yours. The idea that you actually, you encourage parents to embrace silence in their communication with kids, which seems a bit counterintuitive, but sometimes silence is in fact the best kind of communication. And it's a powerful tool. Expand on that a little bit.

Dr. Jerry Weichman: Yeah. Parents have a tendency to talk way too much and it's, it's well intended, but what they have to understand is that for their kids, for where they are developmentally, have about a thirty second attention span to hear everything that you want to say. And most parents have a tendency to run way too long in duration. It's a couple of minutes of a conversation about something important or they're repetitive with saying the same thing frequently or in different ways, but your kids pick up on that. So it's annoying and they shut down.

And so if you're running on or being too repetitive, what you'll start getting out of your kids is head roll, eye roll. Know. Okay. And then it creates a horrible dynamic because then they, you start getting upset at them because now they're being rude and now they're double mad at you because not only do you talk for too long about some I already know about, but now you're mad at me on top of that. And then the whole thing blows up.

When we're talking to our kids, we've got to talk in bullet points and this is challenging. You've got to say everything that you want to say in thirty seconds or less, preferably twenty, it would be, Hey, here's my thirty second take on this. When you say bleed in with, here's my thirty second take. You're going to get a more agreeable kid to sit in front of you and listen. Hey, this is my, this is the issue.

This is the problem. This is why it's an issue for me. This is what, what, what the tool or the fixes for this. I'm telling you because I love you. That's it.

Yeah. It's a package. Okay. And it's hard to do that, but you gotta compress it. Like, can't send big data files through our computers.

It's gotta be compressed. Right? It's the same thing with communicating with our kids.

Matt (host): Yeah. Speak, speak in haiku, not in long form essay, I guess. Yeah. Correct. Yeah.

Yeah. So let's talk about conflict, because that's where communication often breaks down the most. And you've talked about some simple but powerful techniques, things like lowering your voice instead of raising it or even stepping away from an argument when emotions escalate. These small shifts can completely change the tone of a conversation and keep the door open for trust. So when emotions run high, what should parents do differently?

Dr. Jerry Weichman: Well, the first thing is, you know, I think it's, we've got to use our brains through those situations rather than our emotions. Because if we get activated while they're activated, the whole thing explodes and everything that you do in a family system is like

throwing a rock into a still pond, ripples hit all the banks. So if you have other kids in the environment, they feel that if you have a dog, even they tuck their tail and they creep out of the room. So what we want to be able to do is approach our kids initially, is modeling, Hey, you seem really upset, right. And see if we can get them to talk about what's going on.

And sometimes it'll continue to elevate and elevate and elevate. Our natural instincts as parents is to elevate our above our kids to try to suppress the whole situation. But all that does is add gas to a fire and it creates so much more and, or your kids are going to get desensitized to it if it happens frequently. So it means nothing to them anyways. So the best way to handle those more heated situations is to what I call counterbalance the situation, which is if you're on a teeter totter with your kid facing you and they tip it all the way down and you're upset about that.

And then you run to the other side to go have a conversation. The whole thing flips over. But if you, they tip it down and then you back up a lot more on the teeter totter. Now you're establishing balance in that dynamic. So the goal is to lower your voice and talk at a much lower pace and rate with them and try to do that for a good sixty seconds to a couple of minutes doing that will do three things.

One, models for them that they're being too loud and they can catch themselves. Two, they're still emotionally connected to you. So your voice could be pacifying for them. And number three, it's really awkward to have a conversation with someone who is screaming and yelling and someone who is whispering over a prolonged period of time. Someone has to give ground for that dialogue to continue.

If it's not you, it could be your kid. Now, if you're a couple minutes in, in having a very calm dialogue on your end, but your kid is just getting more and more intense or just are not deescalating at all. Then you have to take a break. Okay. You have to take a break because you can't have a rational conversation with the irrational person, regardless of who that is.

And if it's your kid, they need that break. If it's you, you could get into that situation and get fired up and say, and start saying things and doing things that you will regret. If you don't take that break and if your kid's not willing to, you can say, Hey, look, we'll table this later. We'll talk when we're more rational. We can have a more mature conversation.

Just let's let the dust settle. Half of the kids will, will go and do that. If they were half the kids won't, cause they're like,

Matt (host): no, I want to, blah, blah, blah, blah.

Dr. Jerry Weichman: Then it's like, Hey, I need a break now. So I'm going to root myself. And we'll talk about this later. And then what you want to do is you want to have a reapproachment period where you got to let the dust settle, but at some point you have to reapproach them on the conversation. Because if you don't do that, then they realize, well, if I just make my head spin around and green puke go everywhere, I get out of situations.

So there needs to be a reapproachment period and that could be half an hour, an hour, a couple of hours, end of the day. I mean, you want to try to get these nipped in the bud by the end of the day, but you will know your instincts and your intuition will tell you when the dust has started to settle. That's when you go in and you have that thirty second conversation. Hey, I love you. What was that?

Help me understand it. We can like talk through it really quickly so I can get out of, out of your room, please. Right. To me, those are the, some of the best ways to disarm those situations.

Matt (host): Yeah, for sure. So many parents, they interpret defiance or withdrawal as a form of disrespect, but often those behaviors are signs of something a little deeper. There's growing recognition that behaviors like defiance can actually reflect a lack of coping skills or underlying emotional struggles and not the rebellion isn't intentional. So how should parents reframe what they're seeing?

Dr. Jerry Weichman: Yeah, the oppositional behavior is a byproduct of a bigger problem. And so that's why when people come in here with, you know, oppositional behavior, we're not attacking and going after the behavior or going after what's underneath it. And so what you have to understand is that if your kid is acting like this, then yes, you're right. They don't have the coping skills and tools, but even deeper than that, they are dealing with a lot of unresolved hurt and pain that has turned into anger and they don't have the tools to navigate it. And now it is emanating out of your kid because their containers are full.

And one small thing when they're hitting that, that breaking point, Hey, can you pick up your wet towel on the floor? You're going to see the craziest reaction out of something that seems so small and your kid's going to look crazy. They're not all this is, is an indicator that they are dealing with a lot of unresolved emotional hurt and pain that, and it could be not from something huge and severe, but a bunch of small to small, mild, moderate things accumulate to make something severe. Right. So it's just an indicator that that's there.

Number one, B, they don't have the coping skills and tools and C, this is the byproduct of when everything completely comes out of them all at the same time.

Matt (host): Yeah. Yeah. So at the core of all of this is, is trust. Right? And so what are some of the most, what are the most important things that parents can do to build and maintain trust with their teens?

Dr. Jerry Weichman: Well, kids are very good. Our kids are very good at contrasting what we say with what we do. Right. That's what their brain constantly does. Cause they're, they're also, they feel somewhat confined to us by us because we create their boundaries, their invisible boundaries in life.

So their brains are wired to contrast what we say and what we do, because they're looking for where the loopholes are for where the windows are for doing what they want. But when we're as consistent, when we say we're going to be there for them, they can always come to talk to us. We have to, we have to be consistent with that when they, we sell them, Hey if you are drinking, I will come pick you up. No questions asked. And we'll talk about it in the morning.

You have to come through on those things. These are the bigger things or like, Hey, if you ever need a ride, if this ever happens, don't say the things that you're not going to be able to back up because when you do back those things up, it does establish trust with your kids. They see that when you say something, you're going to do something and that really helps them to establish that trust with you and also creating a safe space and place, giving them enough space to breathe, to live their life, to have thoughts to themselves, to have a bad day or two without you having to try to put a probe in their brain about what's happening. These are the things that allow them to feel safe and trust trusting that you're there for them, but you also know the correct distance to keep yourself.

Matt (host): Yeah, you're not gonna react with an overreaction for sure.

Dr. Jerry Weichman: I remember one time my first high school party, my parents had told me so long, Hey, if you ever go to party and there's drinking or drugs there, you just call us and come home and, you know, don't I went I came home from that party and they were like, how was it? I was like, oh, kids were drinking. I saw these kids smoke. And we don't know what, what, what, what? I remember they were freaking out so bad.

I remember in my head in that moment, right that second, had this internal dialogue as I will never tell these guys a single thing about that ever again. Yeah. Yeah. For sure. So we have to really be on our reactions.

Right. Right. Calm and cool.

Matt (host): So most of our listeners are of course parents, but we do have teens and young adults who listen as well. So if, for a teenager who's listening to this right now, maybe someone who feels misunderstood or disconnected from their parents in some way, what would you want them to hear?

Dr. Jerry Weichman: For the kids that are feeling misunderstood or disconnected?

Matt (host): Yeah. And I think that will help the parents also just sort of see it from their kids perspective perhaps.

Dr. Jerry Weichman: Well, I mean, life is never, you're never stuck and it's not black and white. Right. So there's always every day is a new day. Every day is an opportunity for you to make a change to you push out of your comfort zone, to do something different that will get you more of what you want and need in your life, whether it's acquiring information and tools on how to

navigate your mental health better, whether it's making an effort to be nicer or to connect to your parents, right. To stop the distance and the awkwardness that exists.

If it does, you're in control of a lot more of your self, which means you're in a lot more control of how life is going for you. Because if you learn how to control what's happening inside, it doesn't matter as much what's going on outside, but there's always going to be a part of us that needs our mom or our dad in our lives. And even having some semblance of a relationship and connection with them is gonna, is gonna make you feel better forever.

Matt (host): Absolutely. Yes. So let's talk about your new platform, which you've recently launched, which is called Raising Families, and it's designed to support families in the treatment and resolution of some of those common mental health issues. And the Raising P families platform features your model, your special model called the Weichman Bi Pyramid of Mental Health, which is a set of essential tools that every family needs and they're tools that have been proven to work. So can you explain for our listeners more about the Bi Pyramid Model and how it integrates with your new platform?

Dr. Jerry Weichman: Yeah. So I felt compelled to take everything I've learned over twenty seven years and 6,500 families and put it out on a national platform for everybody for free. It really stemmed from watching families struggle and parents now struggle over the years more than I've ever seen them, with their own mental health and being reactive instead of proactive in how they're handling themselves and their kids. Helping the families. I wanted to put everything I could available to parents and their kids, because if the parents can make themselves better, they can teach their kids these tools, the family benefits, hence the name Raising Families.

And so there's a lot of misinformation out there. There's a lot of ineffective mental health tools out there. There's no one place or spot or resource that's trusted that you can go to, to get everything that you're looking for and everything works. And so I wanted to create that. The Bi Pyramid of Mental Health is really simply, Hey, look, here's every mental health tool that I think that every adult, let alone a kid should know, and that they need to navigate life.

If you can teach these in this order, life's going to be okay. Even when it's not, it prevents these huge pitfalls from occurring and they become dips. Right. Cause you're always going to have peaks and valleys, but I mean, we're talking about everything from resilience and how to be a mental fighter in life to being mindful of what you can and can't control to thinking less and taking a lot more action. Cause after the pandemic, we had so many more overthinkers and people that would just focus on the negative things that were happening that they couldn't control.

And they would make it five times worse for them. And then also the tools that really help do help with mental health things like being in the moment or how you choose to look at situations positively or negatively because your lenses affect your thoughts, which then affect your feelings. And another one was how to look beyond yourself because we've gotten very selfish

as a society. And it's all about me, what I want, what I think, what I believe in, by the way, what I believe you should believe too. And it doesn't feel good.

And when you're walking around, not only are adults and parents burnt out and you don't see a lot of eye contact and energy out and smiles, people look like they're 10% zombies. It doesn't feel good. And so what I've realized for myself is that life isn't about me. It's, it's about others and purpose and meaning in life doesn't come from what you achieve or acquire or acquire. It's who you're here for.

And so for our kids, especially that have purpose and meaning in their life, that energy has to go out to everybody else. The eye contact, the smiles, the extra push in your voice when you're talking to someone, putting a positive spin. Yes. Being helpful. But if we can do that, not only do we feel better, we also establish purpose and meaning in our life.

And when we're self consuming our own energy, we have a tendency to hyper focus on everything negative that's happening in our lives. You get a break from that as well. So it's a win across the board. And then the other side of that pyramid is all the physiological tools, things like daily exercise, sunlight, social connectivity, breathing techniques, even something is forcing a smile for five seconds because of the condition that exists between the muscles in your face and the pleasure centers in your brain will make you feel better. The whole platform is based on, Hey, look, everybody life and people do not, nor will they ever control how you think and feel.

You do. And if we can take ownership of that, there's a lot of things that you can do to make the inside better. If you do that, life's going to go a lot better and a lot smoother for you.

Matt (host): Absolutely. I love the idea that you've, you've made these actionable steps for parents and families to take because oftentimes, you know, we don't know where to start sometimes.

Dr. Jerry Weichman: Yeah. And all of those tools are, we talk in-depth on the Raising Families with Doctor. Jerry podcast. Every week it's one topic a week, two episodes. So on Monday you get a ten minute monologue from me on here's the tool, here's the fix, here's the problem, here's how you implement it at home, go.

On Wednesday. I've got a female cohost. That's a mom and we bring an expert or a guest on and we drill way deeper into that topic. Next one, come in next week's another topic on top of I created something called we call follower Fridays where parents are been struggling, particularly moms so much that I wanted to fix this problem, which is they feel very guilty, isolated, and alone and helpless because their kids struggle and they don't have a way to help them. And they feel bad.

They feel like it's their fault that this happened and they don't want to talk for fear of being ostracized or judged or seeing as less than. And so what happens is they get stuck in this. And I wanted to create an online platform for parents to send a voice memo or an email to

info@raisingfamiliespodcast.com. My cohost and I are gonna dig through this every Friday with you, read your questions and answering them and their problems because I want everybody to see out there. Life doesn't come with a manual.

We all make mistakes. You know, our kids are going to be okay, but here's a better way to do this. And we've got to get the dialogue going. It's okay to talk about it because there's no such thing as a perfect parent. And it's all available on the Raising Families Podcast.

Matt (host): Yeah. And so the website for that is just raisingfamiliespodcast.com.

Dr. Jerry Weichman: Is that right? That's correct.

Matt (host): Okay. And we'll have the link in our show notes for sure. So as we wrap up, I'll start by something simple yet powerful. This is that teens may act like they don't want to talk, but yet they still want to be heard. So, communication isn't about having the perfect words, as you've just mentioned, it's about having, it's about being there with timing, presence, patience, and then creating space.

So, these small changes, like giving them time to decompress, spending one on one time together, or simply listening without interrupting can really transform the relationship. So before we close, is there one final takeaway you'd like to leave with parents?

Dr. Jerry Weichman: Yeah, look, I mean, we sweat the small stuff. I've lost a lot of people. We have to caretaker our ailing parents. Know, the one gift and that, that people that have passed away have left me was the realization of time and where my time is going in relation to what my priorities are. And when we're aware of that on a regular basis, then we have a tendency to not sweat the small stuff as well as much.

We have a tendency to spend and want to connect to our kids more and fight for that time more because it's so limited. And the time does go very, very fast. I mean, my, my, my oldest right now is 16. When she drove away, you know, many months ago after she got her license, it wasn't that big of a deal, I remember going, gosh, I feel like I've had this kid for seven or eight years max. Yeah.

Yeah. What you have, I mean, life is what the time we have in life is short, but your time with your kid from birth to 18 is going to feel like nine years. And you want to create more than anything, important than school, more important than sports. It's the relationship and the connection that you have with them so that they have something when they leave your home to come back to.

Matt (host): Absolutely. Yeah. As, as a parent of two young adults, I can attest to the fact that it all goes by so quickly, you know, enjoy the ride certainly and enjoy the company of your children for sure. So my guest today has been Doctor. Jerry Weichman, a clinical psychologist,

adolescent specialist, and expert in helping parents better understand and communicate with their teens.

And you can learn more about his work at again, www.raisingfamiliespodcast.com. And if today's episode resonated with you, please do share it with a friend and don't forget to rate and review Nimble Youth on your Apple Podcasts and Spotify platforms. Your support helps us continue these important conversations. Until next time, remember, connection doesn't happen by accident, it happens through intention. I'm Matt Buttermann, this is Nimble Youth, we'll see you next time.