



**TURN AUTISM AROUND**  
WITH DR. MARY BARBERA

Transcript for Podcast Episode: 065

*Positive Parenting Solutions Without Coercion*  
*/ Interview with ABA Inside Track*

Hosted by: Dr. Mary Barbera

Dr. Mary Barbera                      You're listening to the Turn Autism Around podcast, episode number 65, and I am your host, Dr. Mary Barbera. I'm thrilled that you're tuning in. If this is your first time here, a special welcome to you, and I would love it if you would subscribe to the Turn Autism Around podcast. Today, we are talking about how to be more positive and how to eliminate or at least reduce coercion.

Dr. Mary Barbera                      We're going to be talking to three people at the same time. They are the hosts of a podcast called ABA Inside Track, and they are Dr. Diana Parry-Cruwys, her husband Robert Parry-Cruwys, and Dr. Jackie MacDonald. They are the co-hosts of ABA Inside Track. And among their most popular podcast episodes is a book club podcast on the Power of Positive Parenting by Glenn Latham, and another book called Coercion And Its Fallout by Dr. Sid Murray. We're going to be talking about both of these books and how, whether you're a parent or professional, you benefit.

Dr. Mary Barbera                      So Dr. Diana and Jackie both work at Regis College in the Masters of Science and ABA program. And Robert works as a behavior analyst in his local public school. They love behavior analysis and how to apply behavior analytic principles to everyday life. So it is my pleasure to introduce them. And let's get on with that.

*Welcome to the Turner Autism Around podcast for both parents and professionals in the autism world who want to turn things around, be less stressed, and lead happier lives. And now your host, autism mom, behavior analyst, and bestselling author, Dr. Mary Barbera.*

Dr. Mary Barbera                      So thank you so much for joining me, Robert, Diana, and Jackie.

Robert, Diana, Jackie                Hello!

Dr. Mary Barbera                    So this is a first for me, interviewing more than one person at a time for the podcast, but I'm really looking forward to it. And you guys are the co-hosts of ABA Inside Track, which is another podcast which we're going to talk more about. But before we get to that and before we get to our topic, which is how to be more positive and not coercive, I would love to know how you all fell into the autism world.

Dr. Jackie MacDonald                Yeah. So I'm going to start, Jackie here, I actually fell into behavior analysis and the autism world by accident. I enrolled in a class about learning and behavior as an undergraduate, and the classes formatted in the format called personalized system of instruction, where you don't receive lectures from your instructor until you've actually done the work and that is, you know, the reward that you get to see your instructor. And during that class, I finished early because you could do it on your own time. And the instructor introduced me to a family that needed help in the home with their young son who had recently received a diagnosis. And so I started working with that family, doing home services. And I worked with them for about three years and fell in love with the principles of behavior analysis and working with young children. And I still am in contact with that family till today. So he's now 22 years old and doing okay.

Dr. Mary Barbera                    Great. My son is actually 23 right now; my son with autism. So you've been at this a long time. What year were you an undergrad when you got hooked up with this family?

Dr. Jackie MacDonald                It was 2001. 2000, actually, it was 2000.

Dr. Mary Barbera                    Yeah. Wow. Oh, great. So, Diane, how did you get involved with this whole autism world?

Dr. Diana Parry-Cruwys             Sure, yeah. So my timeline's probably about the same as Jackie. I did a lot of volunteer work in college with a variety of groups serving individuals with disabilities. And I really thought that that was what I wanted to do for my career for a long, long time. I actually did volunteer work in high school, come to think of it, with this population. So that's always been my, you know, career love, I guess I would say. So I sort of got into it through that service mechanism. And then I found behavior analysis after I had been working in the field at large for a while. And once I found that, I was a psych major, but it wasn't focused on behavior analysis. So when I found behavior analysis, I said, wow, this is how I've always thought about how the world works and how, you know, how people acted and behaved. And it all just clicked together for me. So that was how I arrived at behavior analysis.

Dr. Mary Barbera                      Yeah. It reminds me of... I have a master's degree in nursing administration and so I took some coursework at Wharton Business School, University of Penn, and that's where I got my master's degree. And you know, a lot of what I was studying in nursing administration, especially in the business school, was all the business kind of ABA principles that like... I've been doing ABA my whole life and I had no idea what ABA was. So it just made sense. So it sounds like you were in a similar role where it just kind of clicked and made sense.

Dr. Mary Barbera                      So, Rob... And just for our listeners, Rob and Diana, you're both you're married to each other.

Dr. Diana Parry-Cruwys              And not to Jackie.

Robert Parry-Cruwys                 Jackie is also married but to someone else.

Dr. Mary Barbera                      Okay. So Rob, how did you get started?

Robert Parry-Cruwys                 My story is pretty boring compared to the other two. I liked psychology and I liked education as an undergrad and this was, you know, the early 2000s and I had a mentor working at one of our state departments working with individuals with intellectual impairments. And he would give me advice about getting ready to graduate. You know, if you go into special education, there's always a huge need. And if it's something you decide you like, you will always be able to find a really fun, challenging, exciting job. And so I took that to heart and out of school as I started working, you know, individuals with autism because there was a school very close to actually whereas living at the time. And I thought, well, let's try this out. And like he said, there was always a need. There was always a challenge. But there was always a lot of fun involved because I like working with people. I liked feeling like I was helping individuals become more independent, learn new skills. It's why I wanted to teach to begin with. And then sort of just fell into behavior analysis because it was a school based on the principles of behavior analysis. So if you didn't like behavior analysis, you didn't stay very long there. And, you know, it just kind of became something that I lived every day and over the years just become more and more and more excited to learn more about it, and be a part of this community of both education and behavior analysis.

Dr. Mary Barbera                      Yes. I think that's awesome. So you guys are all up. In which state do you live?

Robert Parry-Cruwys                 Massachusetts.

Dr. Mary Barbera                      Massachusetts, up in the New England states. So I got connected with you a month or two ago. I'm on a constant mission to reach out to other podcasters and to really see if we're aligned. If we're aligned then I like to do what I call a podcast swap where I'm on your show and you're on my show. And we've done that with several people: Matt Zacharia, Sasha Long, Amanda Kelly, where I've been on their shows and they're been on my shows. And so when I reached out to you, the three of you were we're excited to have me on. And at the time of this broadcast the episode that I did with you guys on ABA Inside Track is available. Its episode number 116 of ABA Inside Track. And we decided to do a topic on transfer procedures and to give a continuing education credit. So can you describe some of how your podcast is unique and is different from my podcast, from what you know?

Robert Parry-Cruwys                      Well, so our podcast is focused on reviewing research. So every week we pick a topic and then we have related research articles on that. So, for example, the episode you were on, we had some research that you had done on the transfer of seamless control procedures. While our target audience is BCBA's, we really try to keep the conversation interesting enough that anybody could listen to it if they so desired. So they might get a little lost sometimes if we're talking about research because, you know, it's an individual without that same background.

Robert Parry-Cruwys                      But we really started doing the show because one of the things that BCBA's need, just like in almost every field, is constant contact with best practices. And I used to run like a small little journal group. We'd get together and we'd have, you know, an article, same idea. You know, let's talk about let's say, you know, verbal behavior. Let's talk about parenting. And here are some articles or here's a book that we'll read together. And Mary, guess how many people I could get to come to my journal club meetings?

Dr. Mary Barbera                      Was it in person?

Robert Parry-Cruwys                      In person? Yep.

Dr. Mary Barbera                      Yeah, in person I would say less than 10.

Robert Parry-Cruwys                      You would be very right. Much less than 10.

Dr. Diana Parry-Cruwys                      Mostly just me.

Dr. Jackie MacDonald                      And me!

Robert Parry-Cruwys I offered it at my place of work at the time where we had a number of BCBA's who I knew needed to continue contact literature, and it still was very hard to get more than a few people to show up. So we've been friends and colleagues for a long time. And I was doing a podcast totally unrelated to autism and behavior analysis at the time, just for fun. And Jackie sort of mentioned "we need to do this for behavior analysis". And we sort of took both ideas and we stuck together and we've been doing this... And Diana, too. Yes, I don't mean to forget her in the story. And we've been doing that for the past almost four years... Actually, four years after the release of this episode.

Robert Parry-Cruwys We're doing this for four years and it's been really exciting to learn more and more. And I know the topic we're going to discuss today, the idea of coercion and how that relates to society and parenting is one that we really were excited to talk about. And has been really very popular among our listeners and hopefully among yours as well.

Dr. Mary Barbera Yeah, I'm sure it will. And, you know, after I was on your episode, after we recorded that episode, I was trying to come up with something that would apply, because I believe that half of my podcast listeners are parents and half are professionals. So I wanted to be, you know, applicable to as many people as possible. So one of the things you guys did was you sent me a list of your top ten or twelve episodes. And from that list I picked out Positive Parenting, a book by Glenn Latham and another book called Coercion And Its Fallout by Sandeman Murray. And both of those books I love and I haven't read them for a while, but I remember things from them.

Dr. Mary Barbera I mentioned Positive Parenting at least once, if not more than once, in my book, The Verbal Behavior Approach. So Positive Parenting was published in 1994 by Glenn Latham and I had the privilege of seeing Glenn speak at a conference in about the year 2000. And you know I often say, like when I go to do talks and stuff like that, I'm not going to be able to change your life in an hour. But I can say that seeing Glenn Latham present, I believe it was at the conference up in New York in 2000, and seeing him present for one hour did change my life.

Dr. Jackie MacDonald I can believe that. His book is life-changing!

Dr. Mary Barbera It was amazing. And he was not a board-certified behavior analyst. I mean, at the time 2000, it wasn't like really a thing, but he had a Ph.D. in special education. And I remember him saying that he would go and do these independent evaluations and he would go in and they'd be like, oh,

you've never seen a kid like Nick; like swinging from the chandelier and is like, just horrible, man. All this about how bad Nick was and almost every time he would go in and he would find the ratio of positive comments and gestures to negative comments and gestures to be the opposite of what he recommended. So people would be so negative like next stop, you're going gonna lose your recess time. Like all this negative, negative, negative.

Dr. Mary Barbera

And all it really took was turning things around and making it more positive. So you guys have done a podcast episode on part one and part two as a book club. So you had your audience members read the book and you kind of... So let's talk about the positive parenting book first and kind of the highlights from these two podcast episodes you've done in the past on the book. And we're going to link your podcasts in the show notes too. I think like when I saw Glenn Latham speak, he was talking about mostly schools and stuff, but how the positive parenting approach really needs to go both to parents and professionals.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

And Mary, I think a lot of the central concepts that Dr. Latham talked about really relate to how teachers should react and be working with their students as well as with parents. So it definitely is a book that I know I recommended to the teachers as well. I know these aren't your actual biological children, but these principles are the same. And a lot of it boils down to the idea that we should be focusing, just like education, on what is it we are trying to actually teach our children to do? Because, you know, if our children are spending the time doing the things that we would like them to do, because it relates to their ability to be more independent and to make better relationships over time, and then we spend all of our efforts praising them and giving them descriptive feedback about how well they're doing... They'll probably just spend a lot more of their day doing the things that we want them to do anyway.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

Whereas if all we're doing is telling them, don't do this, don't do that, what we're really doing is we're trying to teach them what not to do, which of course, isn't going to necessarily magically teach them how they should be spending their time. And then we're also going to be becoming somewhat aversive, we're gonna become these coercive individuals and especially as kids get older into the teenage years. You know, our oldest son is just starting to get into that timeframe. It really is a matter of will. You've taken all the goodwill that young children often have for their parents. And you sort of poisoned it and you've turned them against you. So they didn't listen to you when they were little because you were spending most your time telling them what not to do; now that they're becoming independent, they just see you as a kind of a figure who just

says nasty things and it mean all the time. So why would you expect them to behave more appropriately then?

Robert Parry-Cruwys

And then we're talking about more dangerous behaviors of young teenagers. So we're talking more about I'm going to leave the house, I'm going to get involved with drugs, I'm going to get involved with potential crime. And that's a worst case scenario. But really, what a lot of folks are doing is sort of funneling their children into not learning the lessons they need to learn to be happy adults, but also then making it so that the individuals who have the knowledge that they want to pass on are aversive, they're just seen as nothing but mean and I don't want anything to do with them.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

You see this in schools and you see this with parents. And, you know, when you think about it, it's not so easy. It's easy to say, oh, you should do this. But as parents, so much of what we're trying to do is just make it through our own busy days. And a lot of the things that young children do, frankly, can be difficult to have to deal with. You know, why are you making so much noise? Why are you breaking that? And it's really easy to get wrapped up in that sort of cycle of I want you to stop doing that, so I yell.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

And then, of course, children don't like being yelled at, so they stop. So our behavior as parents gets reinforced because yelling makes these problems go away, but the kids aren't learning anything. We're becoming aversive and it becomes this really nasty cycle. We're all kind of doing the worst sort of ideas of what parenting are, get reinforced by making the things that are kind of as parents driving this a little, getting us all frustrated makes it go away. And so it just becomes a real sad mess and it's very unfortunate. But again, this is the pattern that we see all, you know, in society, all around us. That's kind of where coercion comes in, too.

Dr. Jackie MacDonald

Yeah. And one thing I love about Dr. Latham's book is that he reminds us that we should ignore the junk behavior. But those behaviors that are annoying to us that we might want to attend to because they are annoying but harmless, and then instead ignore those and focus on anything that the child is doing right. And one point from his book that I love is that if you do focus on only those positive things, then you're actually building a better rapport with your child. So when something does go wrong that you do have to provide some sort of corrective feedback, it's more salient because it's not so pervasive in their in their environment. So in their world, they're not hearing it all the time. So

when you do have to write that corrective feedback, I think it means more.

Dr. Mary Barbera

Yeah. And unfortunately, Dr. Latham passed away. I don't know... I was actually trying to physically get him to my county to present and he ended up passing away. And so, you know, a lot of his work, you know, essentially stopped pretty suddenly. And this book, *The Positive Parenting*, is 1994. And so some of the issues that we have today, like one of the techniques I remember from the book was like picking the TV show. It's like, now everybody's got their own iPad. And, you know, it's hard to raise kids when they have all these this free access to screen time and to things that weren't around when we were kids or when this book was written, so do you have any... Did you talk about that in your podcast at all?

Dr. Jackie MacDonald

Yeah. We talked about it and the dissemination like at the end. And I think going along with the principles that definitely them brings about is that setting boundaries right. And setting consistent boundaries and following through with those boundaries and seeing those types of things as privileges. Right. So you as a child don't have free access to a TV or your iPad or your Kindle. That is a privilege that you get to keep, enjoy, I guess he says if you engage in the appropriate behavior, but it's not something that's guaranteed for you. And I took that as a good parallel. Right? So we set clear and consistent boundaries around screen time and around things that may not have been around in the 90s, I think the same principles apply, right? So where none of us are guaranteed TV time, unfortunately, I love myself some good TV times. So I think as long as they're setting boundaries on when TV time is appropriate, when it's not, when you can access it, when you cannot and then stick with that, I think you're going to see... Obviously you're going to still see emotional responding which he talks about. Kids are like, "aw mom, you're the worst" examples in this book.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

Yeah, it does read sometimes like you're reading a stage play of like, you know, the cranky parent to the angriest child.

Dr. Diana Parry-Cruwys

They're like *Leave It to Beaver*.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

Yeah, they are. But it is very helpful, I think, especially for parents who might not have a history with books. The parenting books or research books. It does make it very concrete. It's going to look like this; your child might say this, and you should say this... So that is helpful. But going on your viewpoint, too, Jackie... One of the other key pieces that Dr. Latham brings up is really the idea of having conversations with your child about



what's important. What are the important rules in your household? What is it that you expect your child to do? And it's not very much when they're little and it's more and more as they get older, and having the children help develop the rules. Some of the systems you might see in like a school, like responsive classroom, I believe does that.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

But it's really all about having them buy into what the rules are because they helped make some of those rules. They gave the examples. And I know Diana and I just came back from a little road trip with our kids. And I know we can get very loud in the car. And my first instinct was, you know, even as someone who's read the book and did the podcast and is trying to be good at this stuff, wants to say, "Everybody back there, be quiet. You're driving your mother and me nuts!" It was so hard to just stop and say, OK, what would Dr. Latham do? Hey, everybody, what are the rules in the car? And you know, I have one son who gets them out right away: Oh, we need to keep our quiet voice and keep our hands to ourselves. The older one just might throw in one, we have a little one that is sort of just learning how to do this.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

And it was great because it became a system of: These are the rules that, you know, are important. Because your kid, they know what the rules are. They just might not be able to express them. And then it was very clear that as long as you are following these rules, these are the things that you will privileges you will have in the car. And, you know, certainly, like you said, right nowadays, if you can have your iPad, you can have your Kindle. You can have your Nintendo Switch. You can have all these things in the car. But the expectation is no longer if you don't follow the rules, I, the meanest parent will take all your things away to punish you and teach you a lesson, so much as when you do the things that we are. We've shared and you agree are important, then you will earn those extra privileges. So now I'm coming from a place of oh, I didn't take away this switch. You chose to hit your brother repeatedly.

Dr. Diana Parry-Cruwys

And to clarify the Switch and Nintendo Switch is an electronic device. Yeah, that seems a little confusing. No actual switches were involved. But I go I think a lot of the point that he's bringing out in the book are that we really need to be taking a proactive approach to parenting versus a reactive approach. Because kids will continue to behave in all sorts of ways and produce all sorts of behavior and just by the nature of being kids can drive you nuts. Right. If you're only responding to that then chances are you're gonna end up giving a lot of negative attention to it and or nagging your kids. Right. And then when you're in that cycle, there becomes very limited opportunity or positive reinforcement or, like Rob saying, providing those instructions proactively on what the expectations

are and helping the kids sort of build your family world on what they should be doing in order to participate fully in it and to get the positive reinforcement that they're craving. Because kids really do crave that, so setting up opportunities for them to fully access that in a positive way will get you really far, but you have to plan ahead in order to have it happen.

Dr. Mary Barbera

One of the big things that Glenn Latham stressed was the need to give everybody in the environment five to eight positives to every negative. And that's the example of the story he told when I saw him speak two decades ago, was it was actually reversed. It was eight negatives to every positive. And so I've used the the five to eight positives for every negative to assess, like if a child is pretty stable and then he's not stable. I have gone on as a consultant, sat back, and just really kept track of that positive to negative ratio and it was reversed. He was this child who's getting a lot more negatives than positives. And I think that is one of the things we can do. And it's not just the kids that need five to eight positives for every negative. It's also this. Your staff members, your colleagues, your husband, everybody, the daycare teacher. And if you find yourself giving negative, negative, negative, then there's going to be a lot less happiness and a lot less peace.

Dr. Mary Barbera

I remember one of the teachers that I worked with, she was having a lot of trouble with managing her staff and she was just nasty to the paraprofessionals that were working with her. And, you know, after they all left, went out to recess, I said, you're going to need to flip that ratio around. You're saying you didn't do that, right. And, you know, you're late for math class with that kid and you're just being really negative. You need to, like, make a point to give them positive feedback.

Dr. Mary Barbera

And she looked at me and she said, well, they're not doing anything right to give me positive feedback. I'm like, Okay, well start with I like your earrings or I like your shirt. Just smiling and not starting out with negatives... And I think some of that is my background as a nurse manager. And, you know, some of the social skills, you know, you all described your backgrounds. And I think it can get... It's not that tricky to turn things around in many settings by simply just being more positive.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

It is very, very true, Mary. And I think one of the one of the things that's tough is for a lot of parents, a lot of teachers, professionals, when they hear this information for the first time, it makes sense. You know, I don't think anyone woke up today said, you know, I'm going to go out of my way to save many nasty things to everyone around me as possible. You know, like a Scrooge character. I mean, everyone would like to be positive, everyone would like to see others smile at them. That is this is

something that we sort of will inherently try to do. The issue that we have to remember, and I think what makes it so hard is so much of how we were all brought up. No, I'm not saying from our parents, but just from sort of the societal pressures around us really focus on don't do that. If you do this, you're going to get in trouble. You know, that's how people keep order. That's just so much kind of the go-to. We're very fluent on using coercive tactics as a society. We're not very fluent in, Hey, here's what I'd like you to do, and when I see you do it, I'm going to tell you what a great job you've done. I'm going to say something nice and positive to you. And that can be strange.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

You know, even I'll see this sometimes at schools, but I'll recommend this to teachers and the very first time they're saying positive things to the students, some of the students, especially when they're older, they look at the teacher like, what are you doing? Like, this isn't how it's supposed to go. They're kids. They get confused almost that they're getting these nice praise statements and they'll often get frustrated because they're so used to: The only attention I've gotten from you has been when I'm doing something wrong, I'm kind of confused. You know what? It's just like a trick or you're trying to pull a fast one on me. You're going to do something nasty to me after I appreciate your feedback. And that can be very sad. And it can be very hard to maintain that five to eight ratio because it is so easy to fall back into all of our old patterns of: I want whatever is happening to stop. The fastest way to make something stop is to raise my voice or to say something sarcastic or to point out someone and tell everyone, don't do it like that, and do some sort of public shaming kind of thing, because that's what we're used to. It does get results. They're just not the long term results that we as educators and caregivers want to be creating. And that's just not what we want to be doing long term.

Dr. Mary Barbera

Yeah, well, I think it's a good transition into our second book. But before we do that, I also wanted to tell listeners out there that Glenn Latham has another book that I bought actually when I saw him speak in the year 2000. And it's called *Behind The Schoolhouse Door: Eight Skills Every Teacher Should Have*. And this book used to cost... I don't know how much I paid for it, but it used to be bound and everything. Now it's free online. So we will link that in the show notes at [MaryBarbara.com/65](http://MaryBarbara.com/65), which is the number of this episode. So that is also a great book and it is a very good teacher skills and it talks about coercion and avoiding coercion, too. So this is this is a great book. Are you guys familiar with that book?

Robert Parry-Cruwys

No, I'm going to download it as fast as I can, especially knowing it's free. I mean, I would pay for a Glenn Latham sequel.

Dr. Diana Parry-Cruwys      Me too!

Dr. Mary Barbera              Unlike Positive Parenting it is short. It's only like 20 pages long.

Dr. Jackie MacDonald        Even better!

Dr. Mary Barbera              It is such a great book. And when I was digging out my Positive Parenting book, I found this, too. So I did a little video blog on this book years ago. I love this book especially for teachers. So both Glenn Latham's books, Positive Parenting and Behind The Schoolhouse Door, they do talk about Sidman Murray's book, Coercion And Its Fallout. So I do want to switch gears and talk a little bit about that book. I read it years ago, I actually had two copies of it, and now I have zero. So I just ordered another one on Amazon. That is a classic book that I remember and really think is very important to our society, let alone our field and the autism ABA world.

Dr. Jackie MacDonald        Yeah, if you're a parent and not a behavior analyst, if you're going to go take that book out of the library and read it, it is pretty hefty. It starts off slow. There are a couple of chapters where he just goes over basic the basic principles of behavior analysis, the definition of coercion, where you can see coercion in society. But I always like to warn people this is not like a Glen Latham book. It's not a textbook, but it's not easy to read as Latham.

Robert Parry-Cruwys        I mean, it's different. I know some individuals when they read books, they like Glenn Latham's style where it gives more concrete examples, whereas Coercion And Its Fallout, there are a lot of references... Not as many as you might think, but a lot of references to behavioral principles and lab work done to sort of develop those understandings of behavioral principles. So if the idea of reading any chapter in which there's a discussion of sort of how the rats respond turns a reader off, then you might want to selectively skip a few chapters, the first two or three chapters. And then some of the later chapters, surprisingly, I think might be more of interest to folks who don't want to hear about research and behavior because they focus more on large scale societal problems and how there's so much coercion in government, police work, jail and prison systems.

Robert Parry-Cruwys        It can certainly get frustrating when you're done reading and you're like, what's the solution? It can be a little difficult, but definitely I think brings home the central point of the books.

Dr. Mary Barbera

I don't have the book in front of me, but what I remember from the book and what I know about coercion is, coercion is punishment or the threat of punishment. And so it doesn't have to be like spanking or anything like that. It can just be raising your voice. It can even be like the threat of punishment can even be like raising your eyebrow up to be like... That's not the way you do it. You don't even have to say it. You could just have your eyebrows raised or give a child a certain look. And yet what Dr. Murray says is that's the way societies are basically developed in and within the criminal justice system it's heavily a punishment system; nobody's nice. Nobody's in there giving five positives for every negative. It's punitive. And workers there are in this very punitive... And I know one of my friends, I should have her on, Amy Wish out in Hawaii. She's done a lot of work with ABA and police officers and first responders and how they have, like a very high rate of suicide, probably because of all this negativity and coercion, that is just a part of their job.

Dr. Mary Barbera

But schools also have a ton of coercion practices, like the clip system where, oh, you're being bad, your clip gets moved. And it you know, a lot of times those systems might work for 90 percent of the kids that, you know, have parents who are positive and have rules and discuss things. But they're pretty much set up to punish the quote unquote, bad kids. And it ends up being really a problem. So that's kind of what I'm thinking the book is about. But maybe you guys you don't because you also have to podcast episodes after reading the book and diving in. So can you guys one of you tell us what the book is about, besides what I just said and give us some examples?

Dr. Jackie MacDonald

Yeah. So I think it starts the book off talking about coercion and talking about just like you said, the definition. He also brings up some of the side effects of using coercion and using the threat of punishment such as, you know, crying. You might see aggression, you might see suppression of auto responding. He gives us some pretty, I think, salient examples in real life about when those might occur. Right. So just like your clip system, it may backfire. Right. So you may be punishing one behavior, but then seeing increases in behavior, you also don't want to see it, such as aggression, increased intensity of other behaviors, or a complete stop of all behaviors. Right. So we see that a lot with school refusal and kids just then stop going to school because it's so aversive there.

Dr. Jackie MacDonald

And so he starts off with that sort of mindset, laying the groundwork of coercion. And, you know, we see it in our everyday society, but we also see, you know, the side effects that come with that.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

And I think the other piece, too, with coercion...coercion And like you were saying, Mary, it is mostly we think about coercion we're thinking about, you know, punishment or consequences that folks find aversive. So the yelling, the raised eyebrow. You know the angry face. I mean, as kids, we all probably remember a time our parents got angry. They didn't have to say a word. We knew something was gonna happen.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

But what he also would consider aversive would be what we refer to as negative reinforcement. So the idea that you should engage... if you do something, I will make something bad go away. So, you know, if you clean your room, I will stop standing here looking angry at you. And I think what's important about that is when we think of negative reinforcement, we hear that word reinforcement and think, well, we're taking a new behavior. We're increasing how often the behavior occurs. So that must be a good thing, right? But when you look at it from Murray Sidman's book, there's the idea of, well, yes, you might be leading to an increase in behavior or teaching a new behavior, but the way you're going about it is one that is long term going to be limiting your effectiveness for future behavior change.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

You know, if you are a person, whether you're a teacher or a parent, that, hey, when I'm there, everyone does what they're supposed to do because they know my presence signals the threat of something bad happening in the future. So they know if they get their work done, I'll leave them alone. Short term, I'll avoid you. But long term eventually you're going to have to interact with the kids when your kids or they're the kids in your care. You're going to have to try to give them feedback. You're going to have to try to get them to do something new. But if you have this long history where all they know you as is knowing this person there, I need to do some whatever will get them to leave me alone... you're sort of limiting your ability to be an effective nurturer or teacher. Because if all anyone knows you is someone I want to get away from me as fast as possible, then individuals will do whatever it takes to get you to go away. Maybe it's what you want them to do short term, but maybe it's something different.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

What Sidman talks about is that counter control of, fine, if I can't get you to leave or I can't get this to go away, I'll just do something bad back to you, and that'll get you to go away or that will get the situation to change. This is what we see a lot with society's attempts to sort of, you know, fight crime. You know, just think about that term fight crime. Like if we see a criminal, we'll punish them so bad they'll never commit crime again. And, you know, long term that that doesn't teach anything. It's not like everyone, again, woke up in the morning, said, you know, what I

need to do is become a criminal. I need to engage in criminal activity. People learn behaviors. They did engage in behavior because of what's going on around them. And it's not so easy to say, well, we just get mad at them, or give them a big enough jail time, or the cops yell at them enough. Then they'll change what they're doing and they'll become fine, upstanding citizens. That's not really the pattern that we see work.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

And what's dangerous is that I think that's a pattern most people believe is the only way to respond. You know, I recently had the chance to talk with some police officers. They had a tour of our local police station. And the officer was the sweetest man. He was so helpful. He really saw his job as serve and protect. But in kind of listening to how he described how police work goes, it was very much of, well, when someone does something wrong, there's a kind of coercive end to it. There's a punishment. They go to jail. They don't have as many rights. And the goal being we really want people to understand this isn't the way to do things. But then hearing him describe it, you know, I'm flashing back to reading Coercion And Its Fallout with the idea. Well, I understand why you think this is the way to do things. I understand why this is how society thinks of responding to big problems. But are we really going to be fixing anything by that? Because is that decreasing? Is that making crime go away? Or even if it is, would there be a better way to do that? You know, through education, through reinforcement and positive praise of the behaviors we want individuals to engage in, that would be helpful to others, that will be helpful and build a stronger society.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

Those are kind of the later chapters of the book. It does get a bit heavy in terms of, what if we all did these things, you know, and as a society we would grow so much. It's a little more complicated. But certainly, I think that's a key point of the book and one that, you know, if you just take a moment to do kind of an inventory of your own day, thinking about how many times you said something positive when someone did something you thought was worth praising or good political good, versus how many times you nagged at someone or got nasty with someone or made a nasty face with someone or said something mean to someone or said, I'm going to punish you if you don't do something to someone... most people would be shocked how much time they spend doing coercive behaviors with people that they love and they do not want to be different sorts of behaviors.

Dr. Mary Barbera

Yeah. And sometimes with two parent households, whether you have a child with autism or not, just raising kids, if you're not on the same page with your spouse or partner, then, you know, one of the people can be kind of the bad guy; the kind of the punisher. And one of them can be,

you know, trying to be positive. Maybe they're just so like, they don't know what to do, that they're being too lax and not giving enough structure.

Dr. Mary Barbera

But I seem to remember in the book reading that, in Coercion And Its Fallout, reading that kids that are raised in coercive environments end up being at high risk. And I think, Rob, you were talking about this high risk for, you know, lying and stealing and drugs and all that kind of stuff. Because then when they get more independent as teens, if they were previously under aversive control of their parents, now they're more independent and they're just basically like, I'm gonna do this, but I am just going to make sure my parents don't know about it. Because otherwise I'll get punished and that it can be a cycle of, you know, just bad decisions. And that's why it's so important and that's why I thought combining these two books is good because, you know, Glenn Latham talks about avoiding coercion and he talks about Coercion And Its Fallout, and the latest edition was published of Coercion And Its Fallout was published in 2000, but there were previous versions that Glenn Latham obviously found really helpful.

Dr. Mary Barbera

So I do think that these two books really go nicely. And I think as a field, you know, we need to be constantly thinking, how can we be more positive? How can we be more preventive and not so reactive? And how we can be using five to eight positives to one negative with everyone in our environment. Just, I think that's one of the ways to be happier in general.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

It's certainly true, and one of the things that we all recommend to parents, you know, is think about your parenting as something that you're planning to do. It's not something that... You just sort of counts on, I'll naturally do it. You know, I had a mom and a dad, too. It's not something that we are born knowing how to do. It's something that we learn just like any other job, really. And so much of what needs to happen has to do with our proactive planning, because... when we sort of just set the environment up so that we're just gonna respond, nine times out of ten, you're going gonna go to that coercive reactive response because, you know, that's how parents work.

Dr. Jackie MacDonald

It works! And its's easy.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

Yeah. It works really well, short-term.

Dr. Diana Parry-Cruwys

Yeah. I think that's Sidman's main point here, is that coercive responses work in the short term because punishment suppresses responding. So



you get that immediate change in behavior that you might be looking for if you wanted to stop doing something. And then that reinforces your use of that type of punishment or negative reinforcement, whichever one it is. But the challenge there is that the long term effects of punishment are far greater and detrimental overall to their relationship than that little bit of reinforcement that you might get from your behavior for the short term effects of punishment. So it's like, Jackie, I know you talked about emotional responding and overall suppression of behavior. And you can also get counter control as well. So in response to a coercive environment, when they engage in behavior to overall sort of escape from that environment or kind of override that contingency that are present in other types of rebellious ways which can be harmful or detrimental to the child.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

Yeah, I think some examples of that would be, you know, kids run away from home. I mean, that's the ultimate is one of the forms of counter control that a child can take. You know, they can't control the environment at home. They're not getting any praise. Well, I'll leave. The issue there is while, again, short term, that child is now at least not in as aversive the location as they were, they still also don't have any adult figure who can teach them what they need to know to become adults themselves. And as you know, potentially coercive as their parents were, it's not like they're going to find necessarily a better parental figure to teach them how to be an adult by leaving home. And again, go back to Glenn Latham's book, a lot of what his book describes are sort of the phases of child development in child growth, and the idea of we can control so much of what our children do when they're very little. Like when a child is a baby, you control everything they do, when you know, pretty much when they eat, where they're going at any point, because they can't move; they're babies.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

But as children grow up, they gain more and more control over their own environment. And we only have a limited window in which we can present ourselves as loving, caring parents. We can provide the instruction that's needed to sort of set our kids on what we consider to be that right path and then work on making sure that when our children are at an age where they really can make all the decisions themselves, that we've set enough limits in a way that aren't so aversive and coercive that the chances are our children will most likely still listen to us. They might not always do what we want them to do, but at the same time they still see us as someone they can come to for help and advice. And that can be very hard because unfortunately, a lot of times when parents are really starting to feel like everything's spiraling out of control is those adolescent years, and it almost feel sometimes like I'll consult the

parents, it feels like it's that damage control. Like, well, your child does have control over all of these situations. So just putting your foot down or just trying to regain control of the situation is going to require you to either rethink everything you've been doing as a parent for the past 16, 17 years and accept that it's not going to be a quick fix. Or I guess you could try to be even more aversive than you've ever been before and see how far that will get you. But then you really are going to be pushing your children away from the home and from your parenting.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

You know, again, that's not to say that if you don't start parenting from day one the right way, you're in trouble. But it is something that I think as parents and caregivers, we really need to be always thinking about and always trying to, you know, take stock of where are we? Are we where we want to be on our trajectory as parents? And if not, okay. Well, how can we change things? How can we shift our progression?

Robert Parry-Cruwys

It's easy for me to say, oh, I always set up rules and, you know, let my kids develop the rules with me. And I'm always praising them for the things they're supposed to do. But I'm just like every other parent; If I come home after a hard day and my kids are spending, you know, a whole 59 minutes out of an hour doing exactly what I asked them to do, I don't say a word about how great they're doing and how proud I am that they're helping each other and how great they are at work, playing and working independently. I wait until that last minute when they start making noise to go, kids leave me alone, it's been a hard day. Everybody makes those mistakes. What's important is that we're always trying to kind of go back to that central positive five to eight feedback ratio, focusing on what's going well, what our children and the individuals under care do well, and spending most of our time there.

Dr. Mary Barbera

Yeah. So parents and professionals can go to ABA Inside Track to listen to two podcasts about the Power of Positive Parenting book and then listen to more podcasts about Coercion And Its Fallout. And behavior analysts can earn learning CEUs. We used to call them type two CEUs, but now they're learning CEUs. And behavior analysts that are getting these CEUs, they have to pay a small fee for these credits. Is that correct?

Dr. Jackie MacDonald

Yeah. So, yeah, you can listen to the episodes for free. Anyone can listen, download them and listen. But if you wanted to get learning credits, you do pay a small fee.

Dr. Mary Barbera

So I think it's a great service. We don't provide with my podcast any continuing education credits, although with my online courses we provide a lot of behavior analyst learning CEUs for behavior analysts and

parents can also attend and other professionals. But I know that for a lot of behavioral analysts having the ability to listen to something that they're interested in, I mean, we always want to be more positive and less coercive, I think in general. And so you have a good bank of information there that I listen just to some of that on both the books, and I found it to be really, really interesting. So to get all the links to go to the right pages, you can either Google ABA Inside Track and Positive Parenting or you can just go to the show notes for this episode at [MaryBerbera.com/65](http://MaryBerbera.com/65). And I think to learn more, I think that it's a great next step. So before we end part of my podcast, goals are for parents and professionals to be less stressed and lead happier lives. Can you each give us one or two things that you do or you recommend for parents and professionals?

Dr. Jackie MacDonald

Yeah, I'll start. I think the most important thing is to every day leave some time for yourself. So even if it's 10 minutes, 20 minutes, even if you have one hundred children or you work like 80 hours, you may live in a shoe, I think it's important to take time for yourself, whether that be take a walk, drink some tea, but have some time for you to reconnect with your goals and to take some deep breaths. Right. Like if you've had a stressful day to reconnect with what's important to you so that you can keep moving forward in your fight against the man, I guess.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

You took that Coercion And Its Fallout book to heart, Jackie.

Dr. Jackie MacDonald

But, you know, I think that's so important. I think sometimes as parents we put so much of ourselves into our children that we forget to take care of ourselves. And it's hard to take care of someone else if you're not being taken care of. So even if it's a little bit. That's what I always recommend.

Dr. Mary Barbera

Okay. What about you, Diana.

Dr. Diana Parry-Cruwys

So what I would say actually relates directly to what we've been talking about: part of what's so stressful as a parent is needing to make so many decisions. Right. Every time your child does something like how should I respond to this new problem home that's now been presented to me? And one way that you can reduce stress related to that is by having a plan in place. And I love Dr. Latham's book for that reason, because he gives you a plan and you can feel comforted that you're following his advice with the plan. And very often, this is the other nice stress reducing piece, the plan is just ignore all of those things that are happening right now. Right. He calls them like jump behavior or weed behavior. Those are just extra extraneous excess responding that you don't actually need to

attend to right now, because this is your kid being silly and it doesn't really matter, or it's behavior that they're trying to do to rile you up, in which case you also don't really want to respond to that. So having that in the back of your mind is like, you know what, I can let it go with regard to this thing that's happening right now. And then that decision is made for you. And that ends up producing less stress overall.

Dr. Mary Barbera

Yeah, I always said let it roll off. You know, just don't attend to the inconsequential little minor things that just ignore it or walk out of the room or go to the bathroom. Like it doesn't have to be... Every time your child says or does something that you have to respond. I think that's great advice. Yes. How about you, Robert?

Robert Parry-Cruwys

I think one of the things I try to do, especially when it relates to kind of feeling like I am living up to my values as a parent, is... I try to accept the fact that I have a million things that I have to do on a given day. Some of them are things I just want to do for myself. Some of them are things that I want to do for my kids. Some of the things my kids want me to do for them. or my wife, you know, Diana wants me to do it for her. And I think what's important is to make sure that you carve out a time, I'm kind of piggybacking on what both of you said, but carve out that time to provide that for the other individual. It doesn't have to be long.

Robert Parry-Cruwys

You know, I remember when my oldest son was just a little, and he wanted to play little games. And sometimes the last thing I wanted to do was play candy land or play with toys. And it was really easy, like, this again? You know, because, you know, little kids, they can only do so many activities. And someone once told me, why don't you to take 15 minutes and just do whatever they want for 15 minutes? They're going to have a great time. And then you won't feel like, oh, I'm a bad parent, I don't want to do this at all. But I want to. But I want to do something else. So I think it's just... Think about the people you care about in your day and try to say, let me find 15 minutes to do whatever it is they're interested. Anyone can do anything for 15 minutes, pretty much. So whether it's a game, whether it's just sitting and talking, whether it's watching a show that you have zero interest in. Just give fifteen minutes. And as much as it's not something you necessarily are doing for yourself directly, I've never had a time when I told my kids, fine, I will play Paw Patrol for the billionth time, you know, that day in a row for fifteen minutes. I've never into that time feeling bad about the time I spent, because I feel like I've spent some really quality time with my kids. You know, it's not always Paw Patrol. It could be rescue bots or, who knows? But I never feel bad for the time I've spent. I feel like I'm living up to the values I want as an individual. And then, you know, I can go, okay, now

I'm going to do whatever the thing I needed to do is. I feel very refreshed and kind of ready to deal with whatever my own personal needs are afterwards. So kind of a little bit of mixing both of your advice in there. I kind of just take 15 minutes with people you care about maybe plan for that for the day.

Dr. Mary Barbera                      Yeah, I think that's great. Well, thank you guys so much. So how can people follow you? Is it ABAInsideTrack.com?

Robert Parry-Cruwys                      Yeah, we're ABAInsideTrack.com. We're on all the social media platforms, ABA inside track. If people want to reach out to us they can do that at ABAInsideTrack@gmail.com. Every summer we do that book club, too, Mary. So if people have suggestions of books they think would be a kind of fun for the listeners to read... I was kind of hoping we could use Glenn Latham's other book, but it was only 20 pages that might not quite fit the bill, but they'll be fun to read. But we usually do that over the summer months. So people have some ideas of some fun summer reading about parenting, about autism, about behavior, we're always looking for good suggestions of new books to do for our summer book club.

Dr. Mary Barbera                      Okay Well, and you can download a ABA Inside Track. You can download Turn Autism Around. If you're listening to this podcast and you haven't subscribed yet ,that always is helpful because then you'll automatically get our podcast right into your phone and your podcast app. And so the more we can disseminate, the better everyone will be. So feel free to subscribe to both our podcasts and leave five star ratings and reviews, if you like what you're hearing, that really helps us to keep going. So thank you so much for your time today, guys.

Robert Parry-Cruwys                      It's been a lot of fun.

Dr. Jackie MacDonald                      Thank you so much.

Dr. Diana Parry-Cruwys                      It's been a real pleasure.

Dr. Mary Barbera                      I'm excited to have the episode out about transfer procedures. So behavior analysts, if you're listening, you can go over and earn, you know, some credits, some learning CEUs, right? On ABA Inside Track with my transfer procedure article podcast, as well as the Positive Parenting and Coercion And Its Fallout. So I think it gives us a lot of room for additional growth. And I'm excited to give our listeners that opportunity. So thanks so much. Have a great day and I will see you all or hopefully you'll hear from me same time next week.

Dr. Mary Barbera

If you're a parent or professional and enjoy listening to this podcast, you have to come check out my online course and community where we take all of this material and we apply it. You'll learn life-changing strategies to get your child or clients to reach their fullest potential. I hope you join me for a free online workshop at [MaryBarbera.com/workshop](http://MaryBarbera.com/workshop) where you can learn how to avoid mistakes, you can see videos of me working with kids with and without autism, and you can learn more about joining my unique online course and community at a very special discount. Once again, go to [MaryBarbera.com/workshop](http://MaryBarbera.com/workshop) for all the details, and I hope to see you there.

*Thanks for listening to the Turn Autism Around podcast with Dr. Mary Barbera. For more information, visit [MaryBarbera.com](http://MaryBarbera.com).*