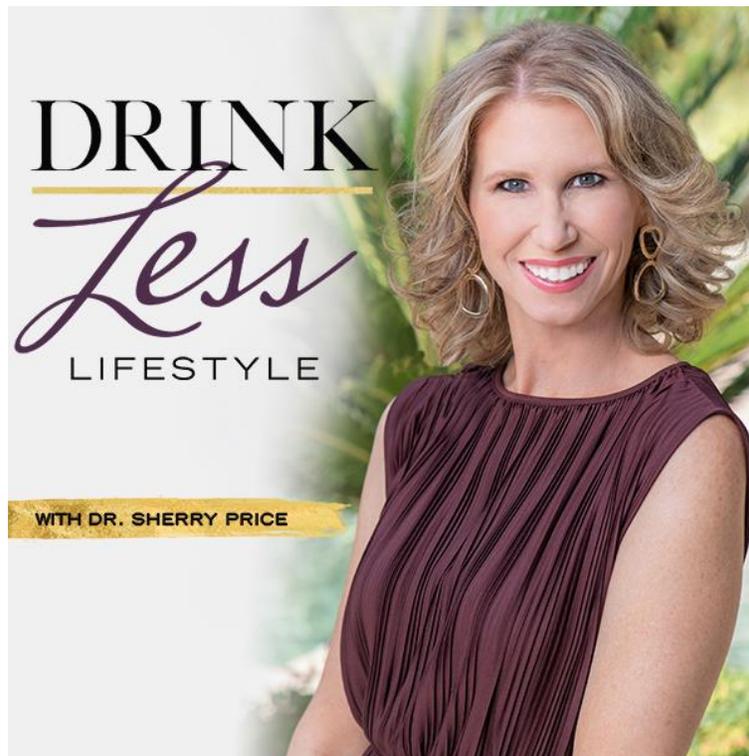


Ep #18: Raising a Child with Special Needs



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Dr. Sherry Price

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You are listening to the *Drink Less Lifestyle Podcast* with Dr. Sherry Price, episode number 18.

Welcome to *Drink Less Lifestyle*, a podcast for successful women who want to change their relationship with alcohol. If you want to drink less, feel healthier and start loving life again you're in the right place. Please remember that the information in this podcast does not constitute medical advice. Now, here's your host, Dr. Sherry Price.

Hello my friends, happy end of January. Gosh, I don't know about you but it feels like 2021 is already flying by. Anybody out there doing a dry January, if so what are your plans as you head into February? I'd love to hear how you're going to navigate this new territory. So come on over, I'd love to support you, give you tips from what I have experienced and what I help my clients with. If you want to come hang out with us on my free and private Facebook page, it's called Stop the Overdrinking Habit. We'll have a link to it in the show notes.

Come and join us because we have such an amazing group of women over there. They are loving, they are supportive, they're caring and non-judgmental. And some of the ladies are actually forming accountability partners and that's so fun to see. Speaking of this wonderful group of ladies this is where the idea generated from for this podcast. And I just want to share with you how it came to be.

So I was at my desk one night after dinner and I hear the ping of a notification come in. It was one of the women in the Facebook group who was posting about all the progress she had made in cutting back on her drinking over the past several months. But tonight she was overdrinking because of her son's IEP. I got the notification because she tagged me in the post and when I read it my heart went out to her. I completely understood the space she was in. And I just imagined her, imagined her feeling overwhelmed.

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I imagined all of the emotions that you get inside and then the pressure to do what is right and deciding what is that for your child. She had mentioned that her son had switched schools. So I'm guessing she was feeling a bit like I'll have to start from scratch and get people to understand what his needs are and how he best responds. I imagined her feeling like I don't know if I can do this. So I instantly reached out to her and I coached her.

Now, I have to say I normally ask permission before I coach somebody because I know not everybody is okay with it. And I know some people may not know exactly what coaching is. I know some people may show up on Facebook just to vent, or to post, or to get a cheerleader, or to get some positive vibes. But that's not what coaching is. So coaching is not just positive thinking and sending good vibes or I don't want people to feel like I'm lecturing either. So I'm always careful to ask but I didn't ask in this scenario because I felt I had an online connection with this woman.

We've been in communication in the past, I feel like I know who she is, I felt that she would be open to me stepping in and coaching her. And what transpired was beautiful. She received my coaching and she immediately understood her actions and wanted to stop. She understood now with clarity the next steps to take. And the beautiful thing is so many other women stepped in. We had teachers. We had special needs advocates. They were all offering her tips and advice. And all this went down pretty quickly in less than 45 minutes.

Just seeing the women support her and getting her through this was amazing. Now, this wonderful lady then also went on to DM me and says, "Hey, if you want to use any of my story in a podcast, please do. I think other women need to hear that." Now after she DM'd me, I got another DM saying, "Hey, I think this would be a great idea for a podcast." And right after those two DMs come in then there is a post on her post saying, "Hey, I think this would be a great topic for a podcast." So it turns out I actually had planned to do this as a podcast but not until much later in the year.

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I wanted to share with you my journey on raising my daughter and her needs and how I felt that led to me overdrinking more. And what I've done about it and what I've learned in the process. So I feel the universe has just said, "No, Sherry, now's the time to do that podcast." So here it is.

So before I begin please just hear me say that I am so not an expert in this area, I really am not. I just want to share with you some of the trials and some of the learnings that I went through as a mom on my journey. I will share with you that I have failed. I have failed a lot and I'm still in the process of forgiving myself for those fails. I didn't handle things always the way I should have. I messed up. I messed up big time sometimes. But I'm learning to forgive myself. And I love how Brené Brown says it, "We're just doing the best that we know how."

And I was doing the best that I knew how then. I just have more knowledge and more tools now that I didn't have back then. And please don't hear me say that I blame my overdrinking on my daughter. I know it was my responsibility. I know it was my choosing. But I felt sometimes it helped so much to over-drink. And that's the part I really want to talk about. And then share how I overcame some of that. And also share some of the lessons that I have learned along the way to help any of you that may feel that this will benefit your journey.

So one key thing I want to start off with and you'll hear me say it again but I think it's so important that I say it upfront to set the framework and then I'll come back to it. But when I was raising my daughter and I knew she was unique and special, I reached out to everyone for advice. And I know we say that a lot of times, we reach out to everyone and it's like two people. I have really reached out to a lot of people. I can count at least 25 to 30. So when I say everybody, it feels like everybody.

I reached out to my mom, my sister, my pastor, my pastor's wife, other moms, mom groups, my daughter's teachers, therapists, including hers and mine, counselors, my daughter's doctors, psychologists, school psychologists. Honestly I feel like I have talked to anyone who I feel can

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help me understand this process, her needs better. So like I said, I'll be circling back to that. But I take full responsibility in whether I followed their advice or not, so I'm not blaming anybody for the things that I've tried. I knew full well whether I was going to implement that advice or not.

So the only really context I want to drive in because this could be several podcasts, is that when she was born lovely, beautiful, as she started to develop I started noticing things were a little unique. Foods couldn't touch, the spoon couldn't be in the bowl, if it was we had to make the whole meal over again because once the spoon got in the bowl somehow it was contaminated and just washing it wasn't enough. She would line up things, when play dates would happen she was always off playing on her own. So we saw the signs and symptoms coming.

And just to let you know where she's at now, so she had been diagnosed as being on the spectrum around three, because I think that's the earliest you can diagnose it. And then still at four and at five we had her evaluated before sending her into school and she didn't qualify for an IEP. Then at the end of the first month of kindergarten, so this is at the end of September the school psychologist calls us in to have a talk with my husband and I. And so we go in and he suggests that she might have Tourette's Syndrome. And we were floored.

Now, that takes a lot for me to say that without bawling because I'm a pharmacist, I'm a healthcare worker, I'm supposed to know and see the signs of these things happening before somebody else tells me. So to have this happen I actually stood there in disbelief. I'm like, "No, I know what Tourette looks like, she doesn't have it. What are you talking about?" So her manifestations started, we don't know exactly when but we can trace back to July of that summer before she started school.

And so her manifestation was lovely of Tourette. She would hum and she would sing and my daughter has an amazing voice. So her humming was beautiful, her singing was beautiful and so of course you think as a parent when your kids are humming or singing that they're happy.

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Well, it turns out her first three weeks of kindergarten weren't wonderful. They were hard for her and they were harder than I understood. She was in the corner a lot because she couldn't stop humming and couldn't stop singing when they had quiet time, or when they read together, where the teacher read to them. They were supposed to all be quiet. So because she made noise she was sent to the corner.

And we knew that she was getting reports sent home on a weekly basis that said her behavior was less than optimal. So I was asking, "How do I discipline this? What do I do? I don't understand, this is kindergarten, how could you have discipline issues so early on?" It was baffling to me. So I would confront her about it, not talk to her about it, I'd confront her about it, I'd show her the note, I'd say, "Why did this happen?"

Because I'd get so upset because logically it didn't make sense to me, my husband and I did great in school, we were star students, teacher's pet, stuff like that. So to have a daughter that's different and struggling already in the first month, I was quite angry, honestly. And so it usually led to a shouting match and sometimes her saying a curse word to me. So of course I did soap in the mouth and, "You're going to swallow a teaspoon of vinegar if you say that."

And she's the personality type that's very strong willed. So when I gave her a teaspoon of vinegar to swallow she goes, "That didn't bother me, you can give me another", as she makes the contorted face, you could tell it bothers her. So the traditional strategies that worked for discipline for most kids didn't work for mine. So I knew not to keep trying them because they didn't work for her.

So this led to me feeling out of control and that she's taking over and that she's winning because everything I'm trying, doesn't seem to work, taking electronics away, all the things she would just be like, "That's fine. I don't need it." So I just wanted to give you her flavor of her special needs. So it comes down that she's diagnosed with Tourette's Syndrome and anxiety.

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So that's what we are working on to date in our household, and this all came from about fifth grade.

I'm not saying there weren't things before that time period and not to say that maybe there are other things that she has but we are just not willing to keep going down the rabbit hole of a diagnosis. And I think the reason why will become evident as I tell this story more here. So knowing that she has these conditions, I'm a healthcare worker so my belief system is get her the best care. And that was the belief system and the philosophy I operated on right from the get go.

So in order to see these experts, a lot of you moms know it takes time, sometimes six, eight months to get an appointment with these specialists. So I spent the first really two years reaching out to all different types of people who I felt can help therapists, occupational therapists because her handwriting wasn't very good. I mean it was so bad, it was like the worst in her class and you couldn't read her letters. And she didn't do spacing correctly or punctuation when those skills were taught.

And so running all around, getting in these experts, getting in these specialists, trying off label, non-FDA approved stuff just to see if it can help was my MO. So just to highlight one of the treatments that we started and tried was when she was in second grade I learned about this off label therapy that might work for her anxiety and might work for her Tourette. And so it required us going to the office four days a week and getting a treatment in the morning before school and a treatment in the afternoon after school.

So if you can imagine for four months four days a week driving half hour one direction, getting the therapy for 20 minutes, driving the other direction for half hour right into school. She slides in right after the bell rings so no time on the playground or bonding with friends, which I think is critical at that age. And then right after school jumping in the car, same thing, half hour there, 20 minute treatment, half hour back. And now it's time for dinner, so no afternoon activities can be done or play dates or any of that.

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So that was a huge commitment financially, emotionally, time wise, all of that. And that happened in the second grade. So just showing you the extent that I pursued therapies for her.

We have tried four different therapists, three which she walked out on and said that they made her feel creepy and she's not going to sit there. So she literally opens the door and says, "I'm out, you make me feel creepy." Which I have to commend her that she knows and has that level of awareness, but it was very hard to get her to find somebody that she would communicate with or trust, that didn't give her the creepy feeling.

Now, all of that I felt for me led to an increase in my drinking. I didn't know how to deal with this. I didn't know how to deal with this behavior. I'm trying my best to get her help and all is I feel is that she doesn't want help. I'm feeling like a failure because the things I'm trying and pursuing don't seem to be working. And I'm just being, to be honest, really hard on myself. I didn't see it as that way then, I saw it as why isn't she coming around to this? Why can't she see that these people are here to help her, that we are using these modalities to help her brain?

So we'd get information from people to say like, "Hey, calm her nervous system. Let's teach her these breathing techniques." So they hand me a pamphlet, I go home, I sit with her on the couch, I said, "Let's try some breathing techniques?" "Oh no, I don't do breathing", walks out. We tried yoga together, we tried meditating together. I learned that one of her teachers did it in the classroom with the Calm app. So I got the Calm app, I started it and she walks away.

So all of this led to me getting very angry and in order not to take it out, I took it out on the bottle. I just didn't want to feel this disappointment, this anger. I'm trying all these things. Nothing seems to be working. What am I going to do? What's next? How can I help? That feeling of I want to do more but I don't know what to do and everything I'm trying doesn't seem to be working. And at this time I decided to become a life coach, transitioned from a pharmacist to a life coach.

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And I have to tell you, the tools that I was learning in my certification and as I graduated and got a life coach, oh my goodness, really transformed the way I see things now, the way I deal with things, and the way I interpret things. So I want to share a lot of those learnings with you.

So about a year after this out of nowhere, I just have to share this because it's just a funny moment. And out of the mouth of babes, out of nowhere. I pick her up at the end of third grade near the end of the year. She's in the back of the car and we had stopped seeing all the therapists, stopped chasing all my rabbit holes that I was putting up. And she said, "Mom, why did you drive me around so much to all these different people to try to fix me when I'm not broken?" Wow, such a dagger to my heart from my little eight year old.

I have to say I fully love that she brought that up. I totally owned it and said, "oh my gosh, I'm so thankful that you said that. And can I just tell you I don't see you as somebody who's broken. I just know if you have a condition it's helpful to get advice from doctors because maybe there's something you can do to lessen it. And all I wanted to do was help your brain if there are things out there that could help it. That's it, but I don't think you're broken."

So it's so interesting to hear her perspective of it because here I am thinking she's not broken, I'm thinking let's just get her more tools to utilize so she can understand how to dismiss a tic, so she can understand her anxiety and control it a little bit better. All these modalities that I thought would be more in her toolkit. But she was taking them as being broken and needing fixing. So just interesting, I thought I'd share that with you because we have one way of seeing things but our kids have another way of seeing things.

So I want to talk about the coaching that I received and what I have learned. And also leave you with some key takeaways that have really helped me in this process. So I'll just be forthright and say I went to my life coach and I would talk about my daughter and how mean she was, how

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much she yelled, how much she was defiant, how she didn't listen to me, how she talked back. I don't know how to parent this. This would never be tolerated in my household. This would never be tolerated in my husband's household. I don't know what to do.

Everything that I've tried, everything that I've read, all the experts that I've talked to, none of their discipline styles worked, none. And I don't feel like I'm exaggerating when I say that. So notice who I'm putting the blame on. And so of course I'm blaming the circumstance, of course I'm blaming my daughter because I don't know how I'm contributing to the problem. And it's not to say she gets away scot free but it's also to say, "I can't necessarily change her but I can change myself."

So again, I'm going to boil this down to the five key takeaways that I've learned on my journey and what this has brought me to is a place of love and acceptance for myself as well as for my daughter.

Alright, so key takeaway number one, after years of asking other moms, people, professionals, teachers, therapists, counselors, support groups, searching online, all the people, I learned that I know my daughter best. And I really want you to hear this, moms out there, I think you know your child best. You know all your children best.

I know we should be open and look for advice, and seek advice, and determine if that will work, but not to rely on it as the source for our children. We have to bring it in through our filter and say, "Yeah, I read that in a book, I tried that strategy, here's what it looked like when I tried it and this is the outcome." And if there's still forcing, forcing, forcing, let them and just know that you've tried that strategy and you know your child best. It took me a long time to come to that realization because I am in healthcare and we always triage to the specialists when we can't figure something out.

And it's not to say not to go to the specialists but then I had to bring it back to my filter and say, "Would that work for my daughter?" And I have to say I didn't always do that. I trusted their advice and I kept doing it when it kept

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failing, kept doing it when it kept failing, kept doing it when it kept failing. And really I had to go within and say, "Okay, why isn't this working? Is there a tweak or is there something that I'm feeling that needs to be done differently?" And rely on my own intuition as a mom.

I have to tell you the one time I did that I got so much of a dramatic result in my daughter by listening to my inner voice on that. So you know your child best.

Number two, I learned that I am to be her biggest advocate and I will honor her, and I will show up for her that way, no matter what. Now, this one, when she was first diagnosed was very hard for me to believe because if anybody looked at her strange when she was, she eventually did develop motor tics and they became very visible. And so when people would look at her funny, I just wanted to roll up in a ball and cry.

I just wanted to get away from those adults because I was afraid what I'd say. I was afraid that I'd want to punch them. I was afraid that they would ruin my daughter's self-esteem. I wanted to run away and hide. I didn't believe I could be her biggest advocate. It took me a while to get there. And I'll tell you what, now I am. And now if I can do anything is to tell other moms, "You have to be your kid's biggest advocate even when it's uncomfortable, even when you don't know how to handle the situation with grace and with tact."

So let me just tell you of an example where it made me feel so good but I don't know if I handled the situation right. So we were in France about two years ago. And when we go, my husband's such an adventurer and he's like, "Let's do the public transportation." I'm like, "Okay, fine." So we take the bus there a lot and we were on the bus. And I just love looking at all the scenery as we're passing by on our way to our destination.

And it's not often that my daughter relies on me to fight her battles or anything. She's got a very strong spine, strong head for that. But she leans over and she said, "Mom, this guy is making me feel creepy." And so I look

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around and I see this older gentleman staring at her. And my daughter, when her anxiety gets going and you stare at her, her tics will manifest more, so she gets more tics or more ticky.

And so I was like, okay, she rarely calls on me to help her. And so I know this is really bothering her. I can feel her tension in her body just by her touching me side to side as we're sitting there on the bus. And I didn't know what to do. I'm in a foreign country. I'm here on vacation. He's an older gentleman, I don't even know if he speaks English, but I don't speak French. And I just leaned over and I said, "Sir, can you please stop staring at my daughter?" And he turned around, I don't know if he understood me but he looked away.

And instantly her body's tension let loose, she softened and she turned over, she gave me a kiss on my cheek and she hugged me around my waist. And I have to tell you, that was a way to show up for her. Was it tactfully done? I don't know and I don't care. But your job is to be their biggest advocate all the time.

So I say, "I'll do it no matter what." No matter if I have to say it in a language somebody may not understand. No matter if I have to be an extravert when I'm normally an introvert, even if it takes me to places that are uncomfortable with my personality, no matter what, I'm going to be her biggest advocate.

Number three, this is huge for your child. So my daughter's most important need from me is my unconditional love. This is huge mommas; I know it's everything for her because I have seen it work. So here I thought it was to find the right therapist, to get her the right occupational therapist to help with her handwriting, or for her not to bang her head against the wall. What strategies can I use, or the right doctor, or the right technique, or the right therapy? I thought that was my primary job.

My primary role is to show her unconditional love. So I think we can do a whole podcast on this unconditional love. So what is unconditional love?

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You show love no matter what they do. So you show them love no matter what the outcome is. So let me just use an example. So when I learned about unconditional love and trying that modality for her and it made total sense to me because I think every human would love unconditional love and would benefit from it.

So I sit down and say, "Hey, we're going to do this breathing exercise, or we're going to do this Calm app." And she says, "No way, that's stupid", and gets up and storms out. I just yell out, "I love you. That's okay." It's not about what she gives to me, it's not about arguing with her, which is what I used to do. "No, this would be so good, this is what they recommended. This is what the doctor said. It's going to help." No, it's like, "Okay, you say no and I'm going to choose love anyway."

So what this looked like when she would be door slamming, she would slam the door and usually say something very loud and nasty. And then I usually yell back. When she'd slam the door I'd say, "Okay, and I love you", through the door. And then sometimes five or ten minutes later I'd open the door and I'd whisper, "I love you still." And I'd close it. So she just kept hearing, "I love you. I love you. I love you."

And I'll tell you what, within four to six weeks she started to change. And within four to six months you know what she stopped doing? She stopped throwing herself on the floor and she stopped banging her head on the wall and on the floor. She used to do both. Her temper tantrums had stopped. So no matter what her reaction was, I just came to her with love. Now, I can look back and say, "Were these ways that she was calling out for my love?" I don't know. I have no idea and I'll never know. And it really doesn't help to know because it's all in the past.

So I think key takeaway number three is really what we can do best for our children.

And takeaway number four is what makes number three happen. And that means we have to first clean up our emotional baggage. And I'll tell you,

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this was everything for me. I didn't even know I had emotional baggage, I didn't. I thought the problem was completely her, it was her diagnosis, it was her anger, it was her temper tantrums. It's because she bangs her head on the wall and she shouldn't be doing that at her age. I thought it was all her.

And I thought my emotions relied on hers. I'm like, "Well, if she's not happy how can I be happy? For me to be happy she has to be calm and happy." Because I got escalated when she got escalated, nobody taught me about how to manage my emotions and how to do that. So I had no idea. I didn't even know it was a thing. So I love this concept and this is something I so stress with my clients. Ladies, this is where life coaching not only helped my drinking but also my relationship with myself and so that I can have a better relationship with my daughter and other people.

So I learned not to blame my overdrinking on my daughter, it wasn't her fault. It was me, I was choosing to over-drink. I don't blame my overdrinking on my girl friends. It was me. That was me choosing to over-drink. That was me choosing not to feel my feelings. It felt so good not to be in that angry state. I just want some relief and this glass and this wine will help get me there. And here's what I've learned. I have learned that I had a lot of smokescreen thoughts about alcohol. Let me talk about what that is.

So when you have smokescreen thoughts, these are just the thoughts that are your natural thoughts about alcohol that just come up pretty regularly that you're pretty in tune with. I need a drink. I need this to help me relax. I'm so angry I can punch something right now, let me just drink to get rid of this anger. Or I love the taste of chardonnay or this pairs so nicely with the food I'm having. I call these smokescreen thoughts because I don't think they're the true reason or the key reason that these are the thoughts causing the desire.

I think there's other reasons below the surface that are causing truly the desire. Those are just smokescreen thoughts. Those are the ones that our brain just hands to us thinking those are the real thoughts. But they're not

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the key thoughts. They're not the drivers causing the over-desire. So I call them the smokescreen because that's what I thought I needed, a drink, it's 5 o'clock, why not, I deserve this, it's going to help relax me. It's going to make the night go easier with this hotheaded child of mine.

What my true thoughts were when I started to have the courage to really look and I learned about smokescreen thoughts, I'm like, "Okay, if I push those thoughts aside, what truly comes up? Why do I really want the drink, what's really going on inside for me?" And that meant I had to connect with myself, so that meant I had to not drink to find this out.

So I'll tell you what some of those thoughts used to be. I don't have them now, but I did back then. I would think especially when she was first diagnosed and I had such a hard time with it emotionally, I had a hard time processing my emotions, as I told you, I didn't want to feel them, didn't know if I can handle this. I told you, I didn't think I'd be strong enough. And those were some of the thoughts I have; I'm not the right parent for her. I'm not sure I could be the parent that she needs. She deserves a better mom, one that's willing to fight for her no matter what.

Because I wasn't in that space when she was diagnosed and maybe it takes a little bit, maybe you've experienced that too. But I want to tell you something, I truly believe that our creator, whether the universe or whatever it is that you believe, they give us the children we're supposed to have, the child we're meant to have, the child or the children we're meant to have. And I don't think it's supposed to be easy.

Nobody says parenting's a walk in the park. And I believe they're here to grow us and develop us as much as we are here to nurture them and guide them, grow them and love them. So like I said, when I finally had the courage to look at my thoughts, I found that a lot of them circled around feelings of feeling inadequate, that I'm not enough, and fear that I didn't have the right answers for her. That I didn't know how to do this process, I don't have anybody in my family with Tourette. I've never treated a patient in clinical practice with Tourette, how do you do this?

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And of course those thoughts are just thoughts. They're not facts. And of course if I have those thoughts I'm not going to want to have those thoughts. I'm going to want to numb and run away. Who wants to feel fear and inadequate? Nobody. And so my brain learned that drinking is this great escape, just drink more, it'll help. I truly believed it was helping. But the truth is it wasn't helping, it wasn't helping me, it wasn't helping my life, it wasn't helping my relationship with my daughter.

And you know what it did? It kept me feeling small, feeling shame and feeling more inadequate. And just think about that, isn't that what alcohol does? It's a depressant, so it's a drug, so when you drink it and its effects on the brain are to kill brain cells and to numb the brain, it's a depressant so of course it's going to keep you feeling, inadequate, small, and your self-esteem is going to shrink even more. So it contributes to the feeling of not enough-ness.

But remember, your child is a gift. Every child is a gift which means we are a gift. And we can choose to love, and to celebrate, and honor, and respect a gift or we can refuse it, ignore it, and treat it like trash. I'll tell you what. The former comes with a lot more joy and happiness. The latter leads to self-destruction and self-sabotage. So for me I had to learn courage, to look at my thoughts, to evaluate them, to see which ones were causing me so much pain because it wasn't my daughter, it was my thoughts.

And finally the last takeaway, I just really resonate with this one for me. There is no one right way. I kept looking for the right doctor, the right therapist, to see the right modality, the right treatment, the right this, the right that, all of the things had to be right. That puts so much pressure on us to make the right decision. And I have to say sometimes I really feel there is no right way. I mean think about it, what if the right way meant you had to go backwards for a bit before you go forward, that if you took one step back you would be able to go 10 steps forward.

Think about what do you learn most from in your life? Do you learn most from success or do you learn most from failure? A lot of us, failure feels

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really painful, so it's a quick learning. Success feels good, and we learn from that, but a lot of people really learn from failures. And I think failures are a part of life, because you can't go through life always succeeding. So I want to bring this back to an example.

Do you remember when I said in second grade we spent four months going out to the clinic, getting this off label therapy to see if it would work before school and after school? So that was second grade. And also what happened in second grade was she had split teachers, she had two teachers. So she had one teacher who came in Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday and then another teacher who ran the classroom on Thursday and Friday. Now, I didn't think that was a good model for her. I'm not sure why she was placed in that classroom but I went with it.

My focus was elsewhere. My focus was on experts, and therapists, and outside the school, so I just went with the flow. We get to the parent teacher conference in March of the second grade year. So we've only got, what, three months left of the school year, so we're meeting in March. And we had learned that her state test scores, for the first time we've learned that they have slipped dramatically. She was in the 40th percentile for math and the 60th for percentile for reading. Now, she previously to that had been upper 80s, low 90s and she slipped that much that year.

We also learned for the first time in that meeting that she was placed on a behavioral chart system in the classroom. And when enquired about how that worked she said, "She's doing the same." So it wasn't working in my opinion because I felt that if you are on a chart there should be some benefit that you should be seeing.

And when we evaluated her test scores and were noticed that her scores were slipping I wondered why this information wasn't coming home. And it turns out that each teacher pointed the finger at the other teacher, so we weren't getting communication that year. So you can imagine my reaction as a mom on the other side of this table not wanting to like – I was lividly mad. I was really ready to rage out.

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But I sat there in that moment and it was because I've done getting a life coach, looking at all my thoughts and understanding where the anger, where the pain, where our emotions really come from, it's that think, feel, act cycle. I understood that I had let myself down. I was not taking responsibility that year for her academics because I was focused on other things. I realized it was equally I could have been responsible, pick up the phone, send an email, but I didn't.

So I feel that this was a huge step backwards, of course we did a lot of things to bring her reading up and her math skills up that summer in that we worked on of course later that year. But that was a huge learning for me and now I understand even more so my role in her life. And I want to just say that one step back led to a catapult forward for my daughter and for me. And so I begin to think about had that year been successful, had that year been different, our tactics that summer would have been different.

But what we developed was an interesting system and a nice way that she learns in the summer that we were able to repeat the following summer and the following summer. So sometimes a setback means you're supposed to do it because the learning that you get from it changes your actions radically in the moment and for the future so that you get better results. And with all due respect there were some personal things going on for those teachers that year which I get it, I get it.

So understanding that there is no right way and understanding what my daughter has experienced from the first week of school being put in the corner to things being a bit challenging for her or a bit different for her, she has so much anxiety when it comes to school and school work. And of course I didn't always handle my emotions around her school work appropriately, but now I have learned.

I have learned so much how to do this better, not saying that I'm the best and I'm not saying that there's not more room for growth. But that reflection backwards really helps you to evaluate where you're at, how far you've come and the learnings that you've learned along the way, so

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understanding this, I get it. Two weeks before school starts she turns into a ball of nerves. Her tics are up, she's so nervous about another school year. She's so nervous about what the teachers are going to think of her and if she's going to go on a behavior chart again.

And each year brings tears to her eyes weeks before school starts but I'm committed, I'm committed to changing her perception of herself and her abilities. I'm committed to make this environment as comfortable as it can be for her learning. I'm committed to her learning style. I'm committed to know that I don't always have the answers but we're willing to figure it out. It's knowing that we will learn together, we will cry together, we will show up together. And yes, of course, achieve together because I will always believe in her and love her no matter what.

And for me I'm willing to feel it all, to experience it all with her, to know that I don't want to numb from this or from her because Morgan, my love, we've got this. And to all the mommas out there, I know this is true for you, you've got this too. It's not always easy and that's okay. We don't always have it figured out, and that's okay. It's not about having the right answers.

What if life was about much more than that? What if one of the most important things you can do is to choose love? And I believe you have to choose that for yourself first and that it radiates from you because you have it in order to give it.

Alright my friends, I wanted to share that experience with you and those five key takeaways. And I want to encourage you on your walk with your child or your children and know that they are perfect gifts designed for you to love them. Have a beautiful week my friends and I'll see you next time.

Thanks for listening to *Drink Less Lifestyle*. If you're ready to change your relationship with drinking now check out the free guide, *How to Effectively Break the Overdrinking Habit* at sherryprice.com/startnow. See you next week.