



**Episode #118:**

**Michelle Gale Talks About Mindful  
Parenting in a Messy World**

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Michelle: The only thing that we really have is this moment right now, but we tend to live in the past and that's where guilt resides. Guilt resides from the past. Decisions we've made, things we've said right, and this is exactly where mindfulness does its best work. Mindfulness takes us out of that rumination space and that guilt space and puts us right back to here right now, and when we asked ourselves what's the most important right now, right? We connect with our heart, we take that breath and we do the next best thing in this moment that we can do.

Debbie: Welcome to the TiLT Parenting podcast, a podcast featuring interviews and conversations aimed at inspiring, informing, and supporting parents raising differently wired kids. I'm your host, Debbie Reber, and today I'm talking with corporate mindfulness teacher, author and Speaker Michelle Gale. Michelle is author of the book *Mindful Parenting in a Messy World* and is the host of the *Mindful Parenting in a Messy World* podcast, which by the way is a great resource. I encourage you to check out if our conversation today sparks your interest in the power of mindfulness in your own parenting life.

While the previous episode I did on mindfulness, which was actually one of the very first TiLT Parenting podcast episodes, it was all about the benefits of mindfulness for kids. In this episode, Michelle and I shift the focus to the parents and explore the ways in which we bring mindfulness into our lives and simple ways can have not only a big impact in parenting with more purpose, but in getting through really difficult situations with our kids, especially when our own emotional reactions are triggered.

And to be clear, we're not going to be talking about meditating for 10 minutes a day or really adding anything onto your plate. This conversation and Michelle's approach is all about being more mindful in our own interactions, noticing our emotions and responses, paying attention to what's going on in our minds and doing that internal work which is so much about what I write about in *Differently Wired*. So I really hope you enjoy this conversation and get a lot out of it.

Debbie: Before I get to the episode, a quick reminder that I would love for you to join me in this special book club on participating in with Understood.org this summer alongside Katherine Reynolds Lewis author of the *The Good News About Bad Behavior* and Nicole Eredics author of *Inclusion in Action* the week of July 27 through August 3rd is devoted to *Differently Wired* and includes what's called a Weekend Wisdom Chat with me on Sunday, July 29th where I'll be available to answer questions and have a continued conversation about the book with parents like you, so to find out more visit Understood Inside Track, under their community events tab, or you can go to the show notes page for this at [www.tiltparenting.com/session118](http://www.tiltparenting.com/session118) and there is a link for the book club on that page. Thank you so much. And now here's my conversation with Michelle.

Debbie: Hey Michelle, welcome to the podcast.



Michelle: Thanks so much for having me, Debbie. I'm happy to be here.

Debbie: I'm looking forward to this conversation because we have a lot to talk about today, specifically around the concept of mindfulness, but I would love if you could take a few minutes just to introduce yourself to the audience a little bit about who you are as a parent and also your work in the world.

Michelle: I'm happy to, I have two boys. One just turned 15 heading the high school and the other is 11 and a half. They both have, they're both wired differently - I'll say it that way. They're both wired differently. My oldest has ADHD, slow processing, and my youngest has serious attention issues and visual spatial and language processing, auditory processing. So he's got a lot going on. So I really appreciated your book and reading your book and not feeling so alone in this journey that I've been on. So appreciating you and your community that you built my work in the world is. I wrote a book called Mindful Parenting in a Messy World. So I'm an author. I came out last year and I go into companies like Google and Disney and other tech companies and I talk to parents and do workshops and keynotes around mindful parenting and I also teach mindfulness just in general in corporate and I also have a, you know, online community and a podcast called Mindful Parenting in a Messy World that I'm, that I'm nurturing online. So that's kind the, the grand, the grand story of all I've got in the world.

Debbie: It is a lot. There's a lot of pieces to it and you know, I just have to say that even just the term messy, like I just think the word messy is so beautiful and so apt for especially our community because our lives can look super messy and yeah, I think there's so much goodness in that and that's what I appreciated about your book and we can talk about that more in a little bit, but I want to talk about mindfulness. I was going back, I think this is going to be episode 119 or 120, but I was going back and looking at all the episodes I've done and I've really only done one episode on mindfulness so far and I think it was episode 2. It was with a woman here in Amsterdam named Kate Berger who ran something called the Expat Kid's Club and was Asher's therapist when we first moved abroad, but her personal love is mindfulness and is very involved in mindfulness, especially with kids.

So we focused on mindfulness with kids, how we can support them in developing a mindfulness practice and what that would look like, but we didn't really talk much about the parenting side, so that's what I want to get into today because as I was reading your book and you know, and through our conversations there is so much overlap in what I'm trying to share with parents in terms of how to be more present in our messy world and that you wrote the book on the mindfulness piece and it's so in alignment. So let's talk about big picture mindfulness. What is mindfulness? You know, what is your definition of that? When we hear it, it's kind of a almost a buzzword now. It's so out there in the media, but what is mindfulness?

Michelle: The simple definition is paying attention on purpose. I always highlight on purpose and with nonjudgmental kindness and compassion. We're paying

attention on purpose and we're not judging whatever's coming up, whatever that is, right? Whether it's joy and happiness or fear and sadness, it's a way to get curious and interested in whatever it is that's coming up in our lives and for parents. You know, I came to my regular practice, I explored mindfulness in college for a few years but came to really come to my regular path and practicing regularly. When two very young children, my oldest son was like three and a half, four and my youngest had just been six months old and that's when I started practicing. And so I had to be really creative with how I wove it into my life because it didn't look like, you know, you often hear sit at the same time every day in the same place. Right? And that just goes out the window when you've got two little children or children of any age can be very difficult.

And it was, my practice was very inconsistent, but I did a lot of small practices many times throughout the day and I often call it, I built this muscle of center, learned to center myself and learned to come home to myself over and over and over again throughout the day by weaving it into what I was already doing. So when I teach mindfulness to parents, it's always look at your day, look at what you already do. So when you're changing your child, can you feel the, the, you know, the fabric of their clothing, right? When you're getting them out of the bath, can you smell they're sweet, fresh hair, right? Really just kind of really living into the sensory experience of our lives. So I hope it's helpful.

Debbie: So what I like about that so much is it's really about presence, right? And which, you know, as you're talking and like that can be, it can feel like a double edge sword intellectually, right? Sometimes if our kids are engaging in really challenging behavior, really leaning into it and being super present is not what we want to be doing, right? We want it to be over. We're trying to avoid that behavior, so talk about what mindfulness can do then for parents who are raising kids, who are more challenging, who you know, what, what is the connection between that mindfulness piece and then how we can better show up for kids, especially kids who are experiencing challenges or their behavior is really tough.

Michelle: Mindfulness helps us build that muscle of what we can tolerate, what we can hold without collapsing or snapping. So when we practice over and over again, it expands our ability to be able to hold discomfort and that's a big part of leadership. As a parent or when I work with executives that I'm teaching the same thing, right? As an executive in an organization, you have to be able to tolerate more and more discomfort. The hierarchy gap that's part of your job and as parents, that's also part of our job, particularly when we have kids that have behavioral issues. We want to be able to tolerate more and more of their discomfort and not take it personally and also be able to be with them and instead of being in that triggered angry state because when, when we get triggered and more angry, it's biological, cortisol is rushing through our system, our amygdala in our brain is going crazy and we lose our prefrontal cortex in the front of our forehead, which is our decision making and best practices and being able to choose what we do next. We lose the ability to do that. We lose creative thinking.



If we can be able to calm ourselves enough to be able to be present with our children, we can actually start to uncover, detective like, what's really going on here? What is this about? Right? Because if anybody's studied nonviolent communication, right, it's never about the behavior. It's always about the unmet needs. So there's always. There's always pain and suffering under that behavior, right? It's never. It's always that. It's never something different and that doesn't mean we shouldn't be allowing them to hurt themselves or hurt us or be in danger that we have to hold and contain of course and create boundaries, but within those boundaries, can we stay with it?

I know my little guy before we understood a lot of what was going on for him was just. He had temper tantrums for years. He's very little and it seemed he was always on, wasn't always but so often on the floor just screaming and we couldn't understand what it was about, but I had enough practice to be able to sit with him and say, I'm here. Like if you need a hug, whatever you need, like I'm, I'm willing to sit here with you. I mean I'm willing to hold this with you and I would stay there until he was done now and he may have hugged me. You may have not hugged me. He may have just sat there screaming, but he knew I was willing to be in this with him and it was a good practice for me to be able to do that.

Debbie: Wow. So powerful. You know, even just the phrase to tolerate discomfort. I've never heard it said like that before and that makes so much sense. You know, I talk about learn how to be comfortable being uncomfortable but this, but in that moment, being able to hold the space, it is such a gift for our kids and if we're able to do it and I, it also can be so, so challenging. You know, you talked about triggers, which we all have. Um, and so I want to ask then, you know, exploring your triggers and you talk about this in your book. I'm exploring what your personal triggers are as your, as a way to become more aware. What does that exactly mean to you and how do you suggest parents listening to this would approach during that work?

Michelle: Yeah, there's a few ways to do it, but when I'm working with parents one on one or in a group, I'll often have them write down and I would encourage your listeners to write down what are the behaviors in other people that drive you crazy, right? So what are the behaviors in other people that drive you crazy and then also thinking through your day, where do you get upset and tight, you know, and anxious and you know, for me, I can give my example. This might help people in thinking it through for themselves. Like it was being late, right? If I perceived we were about to be late somewhere, I would start getting really irritated and it would come on very quickly and really just everything would go sideways, you know? And, and it was me, it was me, like if we're going to be late, we're going to be late and it was probably on me, right? That I didn't start early enough and, and I would get mad at everybody else.

And another big one for me was, if my kids were seemingly grateful, right? If I was perceiving them as ungrateful with like what kids don't act, ungrateful at some point, that would be a huge trigger for me and so parenting is the greatest



opportunity for our own personal and spiritual growth. You know, who are we? Who am I as a person? How do I study myself? Again, I'll bring that up and say it's like a detective. We're studying ourselves, we're studying our children and this isn't easy. You know, I often say mindful parenting, conscious parenting. It's not for the faint of heart. No this is not just a fake it through read a book, you know, done this is a life's practice and this time that we have with our children, it's short time really that we have with them. They are actually our greatest teachers. They will push our buttons over and over again in the same way until we learn what we need to learn about ourselves.

Debbie: And we get lots of opportunities as I always say, but I love that and I liked that idea of just writing what those things are. Those triggers are down because then you can at least not be caught off guard as much and then start noticing a lot more. You know when you're in that like, oh yeah, it's that feeling. Again. I know this.

Michelle: That's when we bring in the centering practice, right? So when we practice centering, right? Maybe it's just a quick three breaths practice. I always teach this to parents, three breaths, so on the first breath, just breathing in and breathing out, and just watching the breath come in and watching the breath go out closely, and then the second breath, relaxing the body, whatever that means for you. I'll often say, just feel gravity. You relax your jaw and the third breath you ask yourself the question, what's most important now? Right? So just noticing the breath, allowing the body to relax and asking yourself the question, what's most important now?

So that's just one idea of the centering practice. It could just be one breathe in and out. You know, sitting up straight posture matters. So they often tell parents like if, if things are tough, you will automatically constrict right when things are stressful in the house. So open up your posture, you know, they did a study at Harvard years ago where they had people take a really tight posture like squeeze themselves into a ball and spit into a cup and they measured cortisol levels, right? Which tells us how stressed we are essentially. And then they had the people take a big open posture and this is within like 30 seconds. Each time they did the posture and have them spit in the cup again and their cortisol levels had come way down. So our posture matters, posture and breath just take on whatever kind of centering practice works for you. And then when you, when you notice those triggers, right? They come up, you say, oh, okay, there I go, let me take a breath, let me do my three breaths practice and now I'm back. And sometimes we catch it and sometimes we don't. But if we practice enough over time, all of the sudden we noticed we can tolerate discomfort more.

Debbie: I love that and thank you so much for sharing that centering practice. I love the question like the breathing I do. I'm not sure I relax the body so much, but I like that too, but that question of what's most important now is huge. You know, if, if you can get to that point, especially, you know, I'm going back to what you're talking about when your kid is having a really tough time and you're just being with them, if you can get to that question in that space, that will change everything, it will change your reaction. It will fuel your ability to tolerate that



discomfort. Your child, I feel strongly that they know that they know that you've got their back and that you're there for the highest good for everybody in that room.

Michelle: Yeah, and don't skip over the body. So the breath and the question is good at the body. So much of our emotion comes from the body. We hold so much tension in the body. The body gives us so much information, right? It's from the body where daily decisions are often made. It sounds kind of crazy, but decisions are made from, from the stance of our body, right? If we're constricted and tight, we make very different decisions in our life. Right? Do I do this? Do I do that? Do I react this way? Do I react that way? When our bodies are open and more soft? We have more choice in what's going to come next. We really do so don't skip the body.

Debbie: I will not. I will not. Listeners, you heard it from Michelle do not skip the body. I'm stretching right now as we're talking. Just to open up a little bit. I'd love that. So I still. I want to go a little deeper into this, the hard moments because I know that's where so many listeners are. I just recently got back from the book tour and talked to so many parents and a lot of the parents who are regular listeners of this podcast I know are kind of in what I affectionately referred to as the dark years, but you know where you can sometimes just feel like you're under attack or you're, you know, you're just the recipient of a lot of intense emotion and behavior. So can you just say a little bit more about you say that being mindful isn't about being calm all the time and staying calm in those moments. Like is this just something that practicing the mindfulness and these other moments and building that muscle, it will just get easier over time. Do you screw up? What do we do when we screw up when we're not able to stay in that space? What are your thoughts on that?

Michelle: We do screw up. Thee story I often tell my, you know, my kids know all about the work that I do and they don't even realize how much these practices are woven through their language in their lives and other people observe it but it's, it's quiet to them but they know about me and they know what I do. And so especially my youngest, if I'm upset with him, you know, and I do kind of raise my voice or get a little angry, he'll say you shouldn't be allowed to teach mindfulness. Look how angry you are and you know, I love it when he does it because I always stop and kind of laugh and you know, break the ice between us, that kind of coldness, it's going on and, and I will always say the same thing, like, you know what, just because we practice mindfulness because I do meditation and do the work that I do does not mean that I don't get big emotions.

Sometimes I do like you do, right? You can calm yourself and center yourself and you how many times he's been almost angry and he's taken a breath or he's felt gravity or feet on the floor or any little things that I've taught them over the years and he'll say I was going to get upset, but I didn't, you know, I came back, I took a breath. So I had some. He hurt himself, right? He's very afraid of blood. So we've been working with that a lot. Every time he gets a cut he's panicked. And so we've been practicing with that. Like can you tolerate that if you breathe and



pause and come back to yourself. So yes, we are going to mess up. I mean, that's the, that's the way of it, that's why the book is called *Mindful Parenting in a Messy World*. It's messy and when we do what I would I do with my kids and I teach is to make the implicit explicit so when we notice and will notice it because it, the more we practice and the more we're able to keep ourselves in a more kind of calm, open, peaceful state, the more surprising and intense those moments of anger become right, will notice them and they don't feel good.

Michelle: They feel even less good than they did before. And so we notice it and I will talk out loud to my kids like God, I was really triggered and like my heart felt tight in my stomach felt tight and I was really angry and it didn't feel good in my body or my heart. And I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I yelled and I'm really curious what the experience was for you while while I was being that way. You know, sometimes they're willing to tell them. Sometimes they're not. Sometimes they'll just say, no, it's okay Mama, you know, no worries. But now I've, I've spoken out loud and that naturally gives them the language to do that for themselves. Right? So we are the models and when we snap and when we say something we regret regret. Dan Siegel, if you're, I'm guessing you're familiar with Dan Siegel's work, whoever's not, he has amazing work in the world and he talks about repair and he talks about repair.

Michelle: So repair is actually one of the most important pieces of parenting that we come back and repair. It actually creates the relationship and the connection in a deeper way than it was before. So when things go wrong and things go, you know, I was telling my son yesterday we were taking a walk into town and he said, tell me about, you know, some of your and dads, like, did you ever have a really hard time? Like we have a really mad at each other where you just didn't even like each other. And I said, you know, yeah, that has happened over the years and we were going to have our 16 year anniversary tomorrow and we've been together for 20. So sure. We've gone through some dark times together and you know what, every time we go through those dark times, we come out the other side stronger as long as we're willing to lean in with each other and as long as we're willing to go through it and, and stay anyway, right we stay. And that's kind of this metaphor that we're talking about in mindfulness. Like things are rough and things are bad and we don't feel good, but what do we often do? We eat, we drink, we shock, you know, we shut down and we don't feel feels and that doesn't bring us any closer to our, you know, kind of pure essence within us. So that's a long answer to your question.

Debbie: No, it was a great answer. And now I have three more questions for you and I'm trying to think of the logical order in which to ask the questions. And what I love about what you just said is, you know, talking about repairing, just that, you know, personally when I have a less than brilliant parenting moment with Asher, I always reconnect afterwards and acknowledge what I could've done differently, but I've never asked that question. I'm curious what the experience was like for you and that feels so important and meaty and yes, of course they're not going to necessarily. Well let me tell you exactly, you know, the, you're not going to always get that insightful answer, but I can just imagine the potential



for dialogue that it opens up and it's so respectful. Like it's taking it to an even higher level. So I really loved that.

Michelle: Yeah, we can get specific, you know, with my kids I'll often say, you know, if they're willing, are you willing? I'd love to hear how that was for you. And if they're willing in that moment and if they're not, that's fine too. Like, okay, we're done. Right. Moving on. But if they're willing, like, did you notice anything like in your, like where in your body? Like when I was being so crazy like what was going on in your body, right? Because that's a sign for them, how they respond to stress and this is so we're priming them very early to understand what, what, what stress is, like in their body, you know, did you notice any thoughts? Like were there any thoughts coming up? Like any emotions that were there, you can ask them, you know, you can kind of guide them through it a little bit if they're open and willing and some kids are more open and some kids you have to like ease into it little by little and you often don't want to start I should say, during those intense situations, right? That shouldn't necessarily be the first time you asked them that. You start asking them questions when they're a little grumpy. When you notice you're grumpy, like what do, what thoughts do you notice come up or what emotions or is there anywhere in your body where you feel grumpy, you know?

And then also you're making it explicit and yourself when you are sad or when you're happy, like where are you? Notice it. So then when the time comes and there's that intense situation, there's a little more priming for it. Like that can be very supportive, or you could just try it, you know, some kids, children are will surprise, you know, I taught mindfulness for three years in my son's school as a volunteer when I first started teaching maybe six or seven years ago, and they just blew me away. I taught from preschool up until middle school and at every stage, their ability to connect with themselves internally after even just five minutes of a short practice was unbelievable.

Michelle: There was a little girl in second or third grade and we were doing the lesson, our thoughts and out of the blue within the lesson, she suddenly gasped, and I said, what? And she said, I'm not making my thoughts. And I was genuine. I get tears in my eyes right now. Even just saying it out loud, to be that age and to have this sense that thoughts are actually not very personal to us. If you pause and if you're in a meditation and you're doing, really come back to your breath and notice when you have thoughts, you will see very quickly. We are not making them. They are nonsensical.

You know there's a sign on my refrigerator that says, don't believe everything you think. Because a lot of mayhem and nonsense that goes on in there and the earlier we can understand that like this little girl, second or third grade, she's like, I'm not making my thoughts. It's just unbelievable and it sounds simple. It really doesn't take very much. We get more and more it becomes more and more difficult. I think the older we get and the more mucked up our ego and our psychology, but when they're little, they're so open. You know, my story is they're just, there's still so connected to source, you know, whatever that means



for, you know, from the universe. Like there's still so connected when they're young that these practices just comes so naturally.

Debbie: Yeah. And then there are also things that people in our generation, this is not the way we were parented most of us, like certainly my parents did not ask me, you know, what the experience is like for you, what are you thinking right now? Like that was not what was happening in my house now. So I think it makes total sense that our kids, you know, why shouldn't our kids be able to go really deep and really tap into that. It's just, we, we don't always see them in that light because of our own experience. So this is a reframe for so many people too, just to kind of reconsider the relationship they want to have with their child and also seeing them in a more whole way.

Michelle: Yeah. I mean this is a whole paradigm shift in parenting for sure. You know, most of us were not parented this way and this is not, it's definitely not easy. But for me and the reason I do the work that I do in the world is because I believe with my whole heart that if we raise a generation of children awake and aware and mindful, we have the potential of healing our planet and our society and our communities and our families. Like for me, that's where the, that's where the core of the healing is going to come from. It's from having people who are aware and who are conscious and who are open and are willing to look inside. So that's why I do what I do.

Debbie: I love that. So now I'm gonna flip it around and I'm going to ask you. Okay. So what's in it for us then? It's fair. So what I'm hearing it just, I've always wanted to bring it back to parents who are in a tough spot. So it's so clear to me that this, you know, the benefits for our kids and for them to grow up with this, with these tools and with this level of self awareness. And I do believe it has so much potential to shift things for our, for the world, for our society. What is mindfulness do for parents who are in the moment, parents who are, who are in a hard place with, with their parenting journey. What are the gifts that it brings them?

Michelle: Well, for one, I just bow to all of the parents out there going through this and, and there I do not in any way want anyone to feel guilty that they can't pull this off, right? Right now. Because life is so hard, right? And life life can be really hard and it can be very difficult to implement this kind of practice when you're in the midst of that. So I just want to say that out loud and if there's an intention there that there's an interest in this, there is like the research is very clear that's out there on mindfulness and there's a lot of metadata out there. You know, it, it lowers our anxiety, it increases our health possibilities, it makes us happier, right? I mean the happiness quotient goes up. So if what we want is to live a life of more ease and more joy and more peace, these practices work and I'm living proof.

Michelle: I had, I have high anxiety, I still do and I still have. People will say, are you are you do still have anxiety? And I say, absolutely. I just. It doesn't run the show. Like I don't take it seriously anymore. The anxieties very much still there very often, but I don't. I have a very different relationship to it. Right? So if parents



can imagine who are listening right now, the how they relate to their current situation, whatever that might be and the stressors in it. And there's that, you know, that tightening and that stress and unhappiness and those wishing it could be another way. There's another way to be with what's happening right now. There's a possibility of relating to it in a very different way. And that's what these practices offer that we can meet our lives. Even the most difficult part of our lives with more openness, with more love, with more compassion for ourselves and for our children.

Michelle: So very much, and it can happen quite quickly, you know, with a very little bit of practice in there can be enough of a shift that you've find that ease, you know, if anyone's listening and I don't know if it's for free or not, it's terrible. I probably should, but there is a website called Simple Habit and I did a seven day, five minutes a day mindfulness program for them specifically for parents. So it's called Simple Habit and I'm sorry if it's a paid thing. I really, I'm really not totally sure. But that does exist. Um, if anyone's interested because that's just very short, you know, for seven days and it might be able to just get enough of that, oh on my website. I have three meditations right now that are afraid of MichelleGale.com. I think there's one on thoughts on emotions. I can't remember exactly what they are, but just getting a little bit of that practice and then just noticing, you know, even if it's just five minutes a day and then just noticing in that moment, how am I meeting this moment differently than I was before and something and something may not, but over time if you do it enough, you will notice that really I say it over and over again. We don't take our lives quite so personally. It feels like things are happening to us, right? My life is happening to us, but it's actually happening for us, through us, with us. Right? It's not being being put on us. We actually have a lot more control of our lives and how we made it. Then we feel like we do right now.

Debbie: Yes. And this is again why I, when we first connected, that was such a kismet because I mean that's what I'm trying to share in Differently Wired too, is that you can experience this differently, you know, the current situation. So I just love the way this connects so deeply with the work that I'm doing and what I'm trying to support parents and doing and you're sharing so many great tools and I want to be conscious of the time, but I just have one more question. You mentioned the word guilt and I just want to look at that for just a minute. That is such a big concept for so many for so many parents generally speaking, but especially for parents who are raising kids, who are atypical. Do you have thoughts about specifically parents who are feeling guilt, whether it's guilt over what their child's going through or not, maybe recognizing their differences soon enough or guilt over an inability to handle it the way you think you should or be more evolved than you? Uh, then you are. How do you suggest parents who are experiencing that move through it?

Michelle: Yeah. Well, I think it rolls right into everything we've been talking about, right? These practices help us to meet the guilt in a different way and we don't accept the guilt to go away. Right? Mean I live these practices. And you know, we just had our sons neuropsych done again, and my youngest, his attention scores were just to the floor and we haven't ever tried medications and the one thing I



haven't tried and I've lived with that conversation going on in my mind and seeing I can give it my own example, right? Noticing that guilt arising, what if medication is the right thing? What if I've done the wrong thing, right? And then meeting that, seeing it right, because I can see it arise, I see it arise, there it is, and I'm able to have a little bit of space from it. I'm able to take a breath, know and be with it and just say I've made the best decisions that I could, you know, following my heart and with the information that I had and then come back to this moment because the past and the future are, they don't even exist, right? It's just like memories from our mind.

The only thing that we really have is this moment right now, but we tend to live in the past and that's where guilt resides. Guilt resides from the past decisions we've made, things we've said, right, and this is exactly where mindfulness does its best work. Mindfulness takes us out of that rumination space and that guilt space and puts us right back to here right now, and when we asked ourselves what's the most important right now, right? We connect with our heart, we take that breath and we do the next best thing in this moment that we can do, and that's all we can do, that this is where those practices do their best work because we will. Guilt is not gonna go away, right? When we have these kinds of kiddos, we decide what therapy, you know, which school do we homeschool? Do we not homeschool? Like all of these things that we're deciding on and it can always feel like, you know, we did the wrong thing and can we come back to this moment and trust you know our heart now. That's really when we come back to our heart and you just put your hand on your heart, close your eyes, take that breath. You know what's most important right now? And just do that thing right now and then do the next thing that next now that's all we have. I'm a huge fan of Eckhart Tolle, a who I think is a wonderful teacher. I'm actually just listening to his book. He has two books that I love, but one is *The Power of Now* and I suggest if anybody hears me say that they listened to it, don't buy that. You can buy the book if you really love to read, but really listen to it.

He's a beautiful teacher and, and this is where he talks out there is nothing else that this moment, everything else was just, you know, when you try to think of the past, if you closed your eyes and try to imagine it, it's very fuzzy. It's not clear or you can't really be with it. So just come back to this moment and be with that guilt in this moment and acknowledge I'm feeling guilt right now. Even just labeling it. There's some wonderful research around labeling and our emotions, right? I'm feeling bad about the guilt that I'm having right now. Even just saying that quietly to ourselves in our mind or out loud actually brings us back to ourselves. It lowers our cortisol, it calms down the Amygdala in our brain. Just labeling it. So I would encourage your parents just to start with that. Start with I'm feeling really bad about the guilt and experiencing right now. And I know I'm a loving, caring parent doing the best I can.

Debbie: That's great. I'm so glad I asked that last question because that was gold. I love all of that. And so practical. Thank you for sharing that. And we're running a little long so I would love if you could let us know we've talked around your book, so just maybe take a sentence or two to tell us about your book and then also where listeners can connect with you.



Michelle: Yeah, thank you. So it's *Mindful Parenting in a Messy World: Living with Presence and Parenting with Purpose*. Buying on Amazon is probably the easiest way to go and people can connect with me on my website. You can go to [www.beamindfulparent.com](http://www.beamindfulparent.com) or [MichelleGale.com](http://MichelleGale.com), but [www.beamindfulparent.com](http://www.beamindfulparent.com) is easier and you can join my mailing list. I send out something usually once a week, but I'm getting ready to launch an online conference this fall that people might be interested in and some just core foundational mindful parenting programs that I'm building right now. So I'd love to connect with your community and if they have any questions for me just to email me at [Michelle@MichelleGale.com](mailto:Michelle@MichelleGale.com).

Debbie: Excellent. And listeners, I will of course include all the links in the show notes page for this episode. So if you want to connect, that's an easy way to do it as well. Michelle, thank you so much. This was such a great conversation. I didn't get through all my questions, but I think we covered so many powerful concepts and I know this is going to be really useful. It's super useful for me already. I, you know, I think that I know all this stuff and there's so much more to learn. So thank you so much for sharing your wisdom and just being on the show today.

Michelle: Yeah, my pleasure. Thank you for all the work you do.

Debbie: You've been listening to the TiLT Parenting podcast for the show notes for this episode, including links to Michelle's website, her podcast, her book, and all the other resources we discussed. Visit [tiltparenting.com/session118](http://tiltparenting.com/session118). If you like what we're doing at the TiLT Parenting podcast and you want to support this little show, there are a few easy and meaningful ways you can do this. One is to join my Patreon campaign. Patreon, an online platform that allows people to make a small monthly contribution to support the work of an artist or a musician or a podcast or it's super easy to sign up and even a small donation helps. In fact the contributions I'm getting through Patreon right now through listeners like you are helping me cover the costs associated with paying Donna, my awesome editor for this show. So if you would like to join those Patreons and help support what I'm doing here, visit [patreon.com/tiltparenting](http://patreon.com/tiltparenting). You can also find a link on every podcast episode, show notes page.

The other way you can help and I asked for this every week, but if you haven't done so, please head over to itunes. Leave a rating or a review or you could do both. There are so many parenting podcasts out there, there are more that are popping on the scene every week. And so having those readings and a lot of reviews helps keep our show highly visible. That helps me continue to reach out and get the big gas that we want to bring on the show. So thank you so much for your help with that. And thanks again. As always for listening. For more information on till parenting, visit [www.tiltparenting.com](http://www.tiltparenting.com).

**RESOURCES MENTIONED:**

- [Michelle Gale's website](#)
- [\*Mindful Parenting in a Messy World: Living with Presence and Parenting with Purpose\* by Michelle Gale](#)
- [Mindful Parenting in a Messy World Podcast](#)
- [Michelle Gale on Facebook](#)
- [Michelle Gale on Twitter](#)
- [Michelle Gale on LinkedIn](#)
- [Simple Habit](#) (mindfulness meditation app)
- [Dr. Dan Siegel](#)
- [\*The Power of Now: A Guide to Spiritual Enlightenment\* by Eckhart Tolle](#)