

Ep #270: Lessons from My Teenagers



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With Your Host

Brooke Castillo

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Welcome to *The Life Coach School Podcast*, where it's all about real clients, real problems and real coaching. And now your host, Master Coach Instructor, Brooke Castillo.

Brooke: Alright, my friends. It's a pretty exciting podcast day today. I'm sitting here with my son, who is bigger than me, Christian; Christian Castillo. And he is going to answer a bunch of questions that I have for him today about being a teenager, about being raised by me, about being a kid. And I asked him to give us all the dirt on what your kids are doing in high school and middle school, what it's like to be a kid, and what it's like for those kids to have y'all as parents. So, let's start. First, do you want to say hi?

Christian: Yeah, hi, I'm Christian.

Brooke: Alright, so let's start with, what was the hardest part of being a kid? Let's start with before middle school to middle school time.

Christian: Before middle school, it was hard just kind of, like, making friends. And for us, we moved around a lot so we were always having to adapt to a new school, make new friends. That was hard to do. But after a certain point, you just kind of adapt to it and just start doing it more and more and then you just become more social. So that was the hardest part before middle school. Middle school itself is pretty hard.

Brooke: It's awful. You told me it's awful.

Christian: Yeah, it is. There's not a lot of good that comes out of it. There's a lot of drama. There's a lot of, you know, fight to be popular. There's not a lot that you can do well in the eyes of your friends.

Brooke: Why is that? Why is middle school such a nightmare?

Christian: It just is. That's when everyone's going through puberty, everything's happening that you haven't dealt with, and I think that's the first step of getting away from your parents. Like, in elementary school, they're always over your shoulder, and middle school is like the first step to

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where they don't really look at everything you do, per se. But that's hard about middle school.

And then the transition to high school is just night and day. It's when you get your license. Everything just seems to change for the better, I think. That's when you just start being your own person and learning. And that's when everyone else does it too, so everyone starts caring less about the little things that you do, right or wrong. It's more about just, like, being yourself.

Brooke: Yeah, being in middle school is kind of like being in a fishbowl. You start realizing that being popular matters...

Christian: Well that's all that matters then.

Brooke: That's all that matters, okay. So what would be your advice for parents who have kids in middle school?

Christian: I mean, it's hard because middle school is that point where they have to start figuring out for themselves, like, what they are, but they also need to be guided too in that time. I feel like high school is a little less guidance, but middle school is when they need to be guided and when they need to grow the most.

So they need a parent, but they need someone that can also listen too; not someone that's just consistently trying to punish them or see what they've done wrong. They need someone that can actually help them grow out of their shell, in a sense.

Brooke: Yeah, so I do a lot of coaching with parents, and one of the things that parents tell me all the time is that they want their kids to behave, they want their kids to get good grades, they want their kids to be good people, they want their kids to be happy, they want their kids to tell them the truth; which I think all of those things are absolutely ridiculous. I mean, it's almost like all the opposite of those things are what happen.

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And so I know, when I was a kid, my mom wanted me to be happy all the time so I just pretended to be happy all the time. And I think that can happen. I watched some of the parents do this – I'm sure I did it too – like, I need you as my kid to be happy. So even when you're in middle school going through all of these awful things, like, I want to fix it. I remember wanting to go to the school and talk to the kids.

Christian: Yeah, you can't do that.

Brooke: Like seriously, you would come home and tell me that something hurt your feelings or something and I wanted to fix it. And I remember, I had this idea that you, as my kid, should be happy all the time. And I actually got coached on that and I remember the person said, like, your kid has to go through this. This is part of the process. And that really changed how I ended up parenting you. So instead of me needing you to be happy all the time, I could let you be bummed out. And I didn't try and fix it all the time.

Christian: Well, they have to make their own mistakes. The kids have to make their own mistakes and they grow through those mistakes. Parents that are always trying to fix their kids, their kids don't grow up and learn those lessons that the bad times do teach them.

Brooke: Yeah, okay, so let's talk a little bit about – I think this is a big one that I coach a lot of parents on is, I just want my kid to tell me the truth, which I think is a lie because the truth is scary, my friends. And I think what happens is kids tell their parents the truth and then they get punished. And so then kids end up not telling the truth.

Christian: So yeah, the more the parents want their kids to tell them the truth, the more they press them to; they'll get the truth less. The more parents push you to tell the truth and push you to get everything that you've done wrong out of him, the less that their kids are going to give up and the better they're going to get at sneaking around to do stuff.

Brooke: So true, and I think too, I've listened to a lot of parents talk about this, where the kid will come to them and tell them something that they've

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done wrong or tell them that they're vaping or having sex or smoking pot or whatever those things are, and they'll immediately punish them the minute that they tell them the truth. And so it's almost like you didn't really want to know the truth.

Christian: Yeah, and that just pushes the kid away more. It makes them less inclined to share anything else that happens that actually they might need a parent at that point, but it pushes the kids further away in that sense.

Brooke: So tell us what you think kids are doing that parents don't know about.

Christian: Oh, just everything. Everything that you think your kids would never do when you're raising them, everything you think they would never do is what they're doing. And it's what every other kid is doing. It's just so accepted nowadays, especially in this culture that we live in, it's so accepted. So everything happens, like vaping, sex, watching porn, drugs, you know, all that happens.

Brooke: Do you feel like there's a lot of pressure to do those things, or do you think – what do you think?

Christian: I think it's less pressure, like, externally. It's more of an internal pressure to, like, fit in, because no one's going to tell you to start having sex or start vaping. It's just going to be, like, "Do you want to do this?" Or, "Do you want to vape?"

Brooke: It's offered to you...

Christian: Yeah, it's offered, but you would feel like kind of an outcast saying no, or if you said you hadn't done certain things, you would feel less accepted with a certain friend group. And there's not a lot of friend groups where none of that is common.

Brooke: So do you think the kids that don't want to do any of that have a really hard time?

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Christian: Yes, fitting into certain groups, but it's hard to say because if you're doing it with a certain group, like, you fit in with them, but it's hard to not do it. It's hard to not be around it too. And once you're around it, at a certain point, you're going to start, like, thinking that that's normal.

Brooke: Yeah, so, one of my philosophies has always been, like, I want my kids to know, I wanted y'all to know the truth about drugs. I was told that drugs were bad and awful and terrible and then I did them and I was like, these are awesome. And so then I was kind of upset about the fact that I felt like I'd been lied to about it.

And so one of the things I'd always told you was, "Hey listen, here's why drugs suck. If you do them and you love them, you're in trouble because then you'll want to do them all the time. And if you do them and you hate them, then you've just wasted your time."

Christian: And money...

Brooke: Yeah, and money. And the truth is, I know from my own personal experience that I was going to do whatever I wanted to do regardless of what my parents said I could do or couldn't do. And I think that's one of – what I've learned from you and Connor is that parents are totally oblivious.

They think their kids are angels. They think, "Oh my kid doesn't do that thing." And really, what the kid is doing is they're not only doing it, but then they're lying about it. And so then I feel like you don't even know your own child. And then the other piece is, or you're punishing them for it and completely destroying your relationship with them because you're constantly back and forth with that sort of thing. So, as a parent, it's tough because you're like, "Oh, so I should just let my kid do all this stuff, or what's the line?"

Christian: Do you want my take on it?

Brooke: Yeah.

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Christian: Well there's no line. You can't force them not to do it. But you can, like, encourage them to. You have to – if they're going to do it, they're going to do it, whether you tell them to or not. They just have to go through the experience of doing it, or whether they get addicted or not, they have to find out for themselves that it's bad because you telling them not to do it isn't going to change anything in their mind. Them doing it and seeing how bad it can be or how addictive it can be and then them making the decision to stop or go a different route is so much more powerful to them.

So, like, them choosing not to do it or choosing to just, like, in their mind say that drugs are bad for them, then that's going to override anything else that you tell them as a parent.

Brooke: Right, I'm not saying that children shouldn't be punished or there shouldn't be consequences for doing things, but I've also seen that actually go a really bad way. I've seen parents feel like they lose control of their kids and are constantly punishing and constantly grounding them and destroying any kind of open communication because the kids are always lying. So I think that's a huge problem.

Christian: Yeah, it's not just that, like, you could go to jail for any drug, really. It's not just your parents. So that's the other part. Like, you can do it as a kid, but there's so many things that can hurt you. That could ruin the rest of your life if you get caught with the wrong thing at the wrong time.

Brooke: That's right. So I think open communication is really big and talking about drugs and sex and all of those things, which we've been able to do in kind of an open way, and to a certain extent, talk about the consequences of those things.

Alright, so let's talk about – what advice do you have to teenage girls, or parents of teenage girls?

Christian: I don't know how you parent teenage girls. No, but girls have it harder than guys do. Especially in middle school, they have to fit in so much more than any other guy because that's all it is, if you're not in the

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popular group or you're not doing certain things that the popular girls are doing, you know, you're just kind of an outcast.

But you can't just – I just said that, but you can't just, like – that's just so watered down nowadays too. It's so tossed around. Like, "Oh yeah, you don't have to be part of the popular group," but that's all you want to do in that time.

So being in that situation again, I don't know what I would have done. Like, in middle school, if I had to do it over again, I wouldn't want to do it. But going through it is hard. You just have to find those two or three close friends that you can spend most of your time with that are good influences or good-ish influences. You can't be around the wrong people. And I feel like, for the most part, the more popular groups in the school are the wrong people.

Brooke: Interesting, why do you think that is?

Christian: I just think that they think the norms for them and in their group are different than what it should be. They're doing kind of adult/teenage things that, you know, 12, 13-year-olds shouldn't be doing or however old you are in middle school.

Brooke: I think that is how old you are. Let's talk about grades.

Christian: Well, you forced us to have good grades.

Brooke: I forced you.

Christian: Yeah, well we couldn't have anything lower than a B until...

Brooke: You could, but what was the consequence?

Christian: I don't remember, take away my phone, I think that's what it was.

Brooke: Yeah, phone and videogames.

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Christian: Yeah, so I think middle school is so easy to get good grades. I mean, you do basically nothing. But I think I had my first C sophomore year, but by that time, I was more mad at myself than you were. I don't think you punished me for it. But I was like – because I wanted to get into a good college, and back then, I really had my eyes set on, I think it was Utah.

So I wanted to get in there for good grades, whether it was for golf or not. So I think the two Cs, I took it harder on myself than y'all did. But that's another thing, like, when you enter freshman year, and really sophomore year, like, that's the kid's decision to really step it up and take grades into their own hands because that's what colleges mainly look at is sophomore and junior year. And that just has to be their decision. You can't make the decision for them as a parent.

Brooke: Alright, so let's talk about what makes a good parent, do you think now that you've kind of seen the stuff your dad and I have done wrong, all the stuff we've done right? What do you think makes a good parent?

Christian: It's understanding who to be at a certain time because at some times, a kid does need a friend or someone to, like, talk about something serious, like whether it be sex or drugs. Like it needs to be serious and you can't punish them for talking to you about that and they need information that most adults do have. But at other times, you need to know when to be a parent and when to try to teach them a lesson and try to guide them through something, whether it be punishment or not.

I'm not saying don't punish, but you have to know who to be at a certain time. So like, an example, like, if your kid's going through like a breakup or their first love or whatever, you can't be punishing them if their grades drop because that just only makes it worse. You have to be a friend – not even a friend, because I know parents don't like that word.

They have to be just with them and helping them get back to where they were, helping them grow, because most relationships, you do grow

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afterwards. Like, you get down, but then you come back stronger. So they just need to understand who to be at certain times.

Brooke: Interesting. Is there anything we did really wrong?

Christian: Y'all, not that I can think of.

Brooke: Which is kind of crazy because usually kids – okay, now you've got something...

Christian: No, in the time, y'all did so many things wrong. I think...

Brooke: At the time, you thought it was wrong.

Christian: Everything you did was wrong and I guarantee you, if you asked me when I asked to get my tattoo, I would have said that was wrong because it's my decision, but I'm 18 and you're making me wait until I'm 21, which in five or 10 years, I'm going to thank you for, but right now...

Brooke: You hate me for it...

Christian: Yeah, I don't like you for it because I want a tattoo.

Brooke: But you have enough self-awareness to know it's probably a good idea for you to wait.

Christian: Well yeah, so it is...

Brooke: By the way, y'all, we have a bet that he'll want a different tattoo when he turns 21 than the one he wants now.

Christian: No, I'm going want the same one and she's going to pay for it.

Brooke: I said I would pay for it if he wants the same one. So say what you want now so we can confirm it.

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Christian: So I want Mathew 19:26, it's a bible verse that says, "With man, this is impossible, with God, all things are possible." And I want it tattooed in my grandmother's handwriting on my chest.

Brooke: Right, you heard it first here, y'all.

Christian: If I don't want it when I'm 21, it would be sad. And I'm not going to get it just to get it. I think I have enough self-awareness to know that I don't want something permanently on my body unless I really do want it. And that's another thing too, tattoos, when you turn 18, especially with girls, that's all they want. Girls are so addicted to doing that first tattoo or being the first within their group or group of friends to do it.

Brooke: That's so crazy. That was never a thing. That's never been a thing with my group.

Christian: It's getting so much more accepted in this day and age. There's a lot of jobs now that you don't even need to cover them up. It's just so accepted, as long as they're not too bad, you don't have to cover them up anymore. And they're so accepted among athletes and all these sports.

Brooke: It's an adult decision, for sure.

Christian: That's why the age is 18.

Brooke: Do you feel like you're an adult at 18? Do you feel like you're fully baked?

Christian: In some ways, yes, in other ways, no. I would be more an adult if I was financially independent or – I know I can be, but right now I'm not independent enough to live alone, as of now. If I was living alone, like before, I know now I'd be okay. But if you put me into an apartment tomorrow and told me to live alone, I would need some time to adapt to it. And that's just kind of an adult thing. Like, going to college, you're going to be kind of whatever for a couple of weeks, but then you'll be adapted to it and you'll be mature enough to handle being alone or with roommates or whatever, but just away from your parents.

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Brooke: So why do you think you turned out so well? Because I think you turned out pretty well, do you think you turned out pretty well so far?

Christian: So far, so far. It was a kind of a thing, because I think I have the awareness to know when I need to learn a lesson or a lesson has been learned, like whether it be a breakup or something bad that happened or smoking weed for the first time. Like, all these things, you have to learn from. A lot of kids don't.

They just kind of keep in these same patterns and keep, like, getting down on themselves and not making good decisions afterwards. Like, if something bad happens to you, you have to learn how to grow out of it or grow through it, versus like staying down.

So I think I turned out well because I had to go through a lot of things on my own, like, without you. Like, you weren't over my shoulder doing it, for grades for example. Like, I had to go through on my own how to get good grades and how to work the system within our public schools, whereas a lot of kids don't and their parents are always telling them what to do about them. That's just one example. There's hundreds I could give you.

Brooke: Yeah, so I didn't even look at your grades or supervise your grades. They send it all on the computer. I didn't check...

Christian: I think the last time you checked, it was freshman year. I think I had a C for a week or something and you got mad. But I got it right back up and I don't think you've looked at them since. There's just no reason.

Brooke: And you know, I don't even remember getting mad. I just remember thinking that you're so much smarter than that, you were capable of so much more than you were actually applying yourself, and I think you knew that.

Christian: Yeah, and, I mean, I haven't even tried at all my senior year. Senior ends in, what, 13 days, and I haven't tried at all this whole year and I have straight As. So if I applied myself and took the harder classes, if I

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had to do it again, that's what I would have done. But then again, like, you have to enjoy high school too.

Brooke: But I think that really is a reflection of my values too, and that's what's going to happen with your parents.

Christian: Well as a parent's value, their parenting comes straight from the value of themselves and their kids. If they value their kids, like, to be the best, then they will be parented like they're the best. If they view themselves as average and they obviously will view their kids as average, then they're going to be raised very leniently, very, "Go do what you want and I'm not going to really care." But you just have to find that balance.

Brooke: Right, and for me, I never thought that really good grades was a reflection on your ability to be in the world. But on the other hand, I felt like you guys are both so smart that...

Christian: And it's the only job that you have for the four years because high school grades are really what matter, and that's the only job a high school-er has is good grades, you know, don't do anything too bad or permanent, you know, get your driver's license and don't get in an accident. Those are your responsibilities.

Brooke: So tell us about your future.

Christian: Mine? So, I think August 21st, I move out to Dallas Baptists...

Brooke: Not that you're counting days...

Christian: Not that I'm counting days. Not that I'm trying to get away from you. But no, I'll move there and then I'll play golf for them and go to school there, getting my accounting degree. Yeah, just enjoy summer before I go do it. I'll probably end up taking summer classes after this summer, but this will be my last full, I think, summer of just purely playing golf. I can play whatever golf I want, amateur, junior, or some pro events. I can play whatever I want, I can do whatever I want for the whole summer. I don't

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have anyone telling me what to do, so I'm going to really enjoy this summer and then get to work at DBU.

Brooke: Yeah, do you want to play golf all four years there or what do you want to do?

Christian: Yeah, so the goal right now is to transfer after two years and try to go to a better division one college, but if it doesn't – like, if I'm not playing well, I'm not going to force trying to get out of there. But if I'm just playing ridiculously well and, you know, I get some offers somewhere, I'll probably end up taking one. But I'm not going to try to force it. I'm just going to focus on the tomorrow and playing well each and every day. Yeah, I'm not too worried about it.

Brooke: yeah, do you feel like you have a golf career ahead of you?

Christian: Yeah, and I'll probably turn pro after college, whether I transfer out or not, and I'll try do that. But I think, in the long run, what I'll end up doing is accounting, and then definitely a lot of traveling. That's what I want to do. I want to do my own kind of traveling, because traveling with y'all has been great, but it's not the real experience every time. First class is a little different than the real experience...

Brooke: You want to go coach with a backpack...

Christian: Yeah, backpacking through Europe or South America or something.

Brooke: Yeah, so I'm not a huge fan of college, but I told Christian I would pay for his college as long as got a degree that he could make at least six figures when he got out of there, so super good at math, he's going to get an accounting degree.

Christian: I hope I make more than six figures. I have a lot to live up to.

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Brooke: Yeah, right, and I always wanted him to have the ability to go get a job at any point and run his own business if he wanted to, so I feel like that's smart. That's good stuff. Anything else you want to say?

Christian: I mean, do we want to go over any of that?

Brooke: We talked about that, the stricter you are, the less you're going to know.

Christian: Yeah, and I mean, a lot of parents, they know what they choose to know, like what you asked me earlier, like what do you think parents don't know about their kids. It's what they choose not to know. It's what, in their mind, if they're being naïve to the point where they think, "Oh my daughter would never do that or my son would never do that." Whereas, in reality, that's what they are doing every day or whenever.

So you have to be within the real world at the time, like as a parent. You have to know what's going on, like, in the culture or what your kids are doing or what your kid's friends are doing. Because if you know your kid's friends are having sex or whatever, it's pretty obvious that your kid is probably having sex too. So you have to just understand that...

Brooke: We're making some parents mad right now because they're like, "Not my kid." And I actually do think – I'd be curious what you think about this because you have a lot of friends that are religious and you weren't raised religious but you have a lot of friends that are very religious and I think a lot of the religion upbringing can sometimes prevent kids from kind of going down those wayward roads, when they're a little more focused on the morals and the guidelines of the church.

Christian: Yeah, so I didn't grow up in the church but I got saved and got baptized, did all of that, and I'm not saying there's anything wrong with growing up in the church.

Brooke: Let's talk about that for a minute. Why did you do that?

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Christian: Because I always wanted to go to a church, since I was in California, and then right when we moved to Texas, that's when I found a church that believed the same that I did. It's a non-denominational just purely biblical, of the bible, and that's what I believed. I didn't have to, like, learn that. That's just what I believed.

So I found the right church, found an amazing pastor at Church 11-32 and I just loved being able to go there and be with likeminded people. And in Texas, it's definitely a lot more respectful, like the common culture down here, so it was very welcoming. And I always wanted to be baptized. I was told that that's how you were saved, like that's an outward expression of your inward change. So that's why I believed and that's how I still believe. And that's why I did it.

And I think that kids growing up in the church, they have a clear path as to what's right and wrong, but they have to know why it's right or wrong because a lot of parents that are Christian or Catholic or whatever, Mormon, whatever, their parents tell them that it's bad because God says it's bad or whatever. But they need to understand why it's bad. And that's what I think...

Brooke: For them personally?

Christian: For them personally, that's what you taught me. Like, it's bad because it leads to this kind of lifestyle. If you want that lifestyle, you can go get it, but it's not that hard to get, but you need to value yourself enough to know that that's not the life that you want to live. I think Christians, they teach the right thing, but they don't really teach it, like, deep down, like you taught me.

Brooke: Interesting. It's the weirdest thing to have a kid because you think that your kid's going to turn out just like you. Like, you have this little baby that came out of your body and you think they're going to believe what you believe and be – and I've always been spiritual and believed in God and had a very clear relationship with myself about that connection, but I've never been religious in the sense that I would go to church or that sort of

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thing. So it's just such a trip when all of a sudden you have this child that has a very different approach to that.

Christian: Well yeah, and I mean, I have a lot of friends that are forced to go to church and they hate it, and that's why it was so much better for me because I got to choose it myself and that's what I want to do myself. I think that's the whole purpose of this podcast is we're just trying to tell them that the most powerful thing you can do for your kids is making them make a decision for themselves. And you can't make them choose the right thing.

Brooke: But I don't think – I think it's so hard as a parent because you feel like that's your responsibility. This is the two mistakes I think we make is we think it's my responsibility for you to be happy all the time, like anytime you're not happy, I need to do something to make you happy, make you feel better, make you better. But also, it's so hard to just let you be who you are if who you are is not...

Christian: Not who you agree with?

Brooke: Some things we disagree on, right? And there's some pretty significant things that we disagree on, but being able to have that conversation, for me to allow you to believe what you believe and be who you are, even though it's different in some ways than the way I am is, like, what I think makes our relationship so awesome.

Christian: Well yeah, and I mean, there's a lot of people that you hang around with every day that you don't have the same beliefs as. But it's the same thing with your kid. Like, you can't control what they believe and you will never be able to control how they turn out or how they believe.

Brooke: And trying will destroy...

Christian: Trying just makes it worse.

Brooke: I think so too.

Christian: So you have to let them be their own person.

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Brooke: That's hard for us parents.

Christian: But you have to guide them too. So you have to find the middle ground.

Brooke: And that's the art of being apparent.

Christian: And that's what y'all did well and I think a lot of parents don't do that well.

Brooke: I think that's very challenging to do. I think you have to be very secure in who you are, but you also have to realize that your children are going to be who they are going to be.

Christian: And kids do tend to turn out similar to their parents, not everything will be the same, obviously, but they turn out similar.

Brooke: Hopefully. Similar in some ways and...

Christian: Like, certain mindsets, certain beliefs, like, they turn out usually on the same pattern, but some things that are pushed more or some things that are more pressed on them as a kid or as they're growing up, sometimes the kids will drift away from. So if they're always pushed to get good grades or that sex is bad or drugs are terrible, they kind of go away from that if they're just pushed on that their life. And then they find someone that's like, "Yeah, I do drugs all the time." And then you're like, "Oh, okay, it's not that bad, obviously."

Brooke: So what do you think about this theory that there's a lot of parenting theories that kids don't do what you tell them, kids do what you do. They follow your example. Do you think that's true?

Christian: Well actions speak louder than words, for sure. So you could tell a kid to do the thing 100 times, but if you're doing something else, that's what they're going to end up doing.

Brooke: Do you think that's true?

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Christian: Yeah, so I think if you kept telling us that we needed to be rich or make six figures but you were making \$20,000 a year, that's probably where we'd end up being. So I think you making the money you make or having this business that you have, it speaks louder than you telling us we have to make six figures no matter what we do.

Brooke: Right, which I would never tell you unless I'm paying for your college.

Christian: Exactly.

Brooke: I feel like if you're going to go to college then you should at least get out of it what you're putting into it, at least the ability to make that kind of money.

Christian: And college is getting less in demand now because you don't need a college degree to do the job that you want, for the most part. Like if you want to start your own business, you don't need any prerequisites. You can just start your own business.

Brooke: Why did you choose to go to college?

Christian: I would say it's 50% golf, and then 50% just to have the degree of an accountant and to be able to go to whoever, wherever, and just be an accountant and learn about money, because everyone loves money, right?

Brooke: Not everyone, but the Castillo family...

Christian: I just wanted to learn about money and learn everything about it that I can and, you know, I just want to be able to make my money...

Brooke: And the college experience too...

Christian: And make my money go further. And the college experience is great, but I'm not going to a huge university. Like, I'm not going to Alabama or Clemson or OU, these bigger universities with, like, Greek life and all this stuff. I'm going to a smaller university...

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Brooke: Thank goodness.

Christian: I'm going to a smaller university that has less of that, but it still has it. So I'll get to experience it, but just not on the scale that – I feel like a lot of these kids out of high school are getting in student debt just so they can go experience it and then talk about it for the rest of their life. They're not going to learn anything very deep there.

Like, if you're going to Alabama and just joining a frat or sorority and going to football games, like, that's great, but that should not be the reason why you go. And that's what a lot of the kids are doing nowadays because they think that college is, like, whatever.

Brooke: Like a party.

Christian: Exactly.

Brooke: Yeah, it's a really, really expensive party...

Christian: That doesn't teach you a lot.

Brooke: Well, and if you want to be a doctor, you want to be an attorney...

Christian: You're going to need to go to all that school and lawyer, you're going to have to do all those tests and...

Brooke: Right, but going to college and not knowing what your major is...

Christian: Yeah, when you're undeclared or switching majors, it can get pricey fast.

Brooke: And with no end in sight.

Christian: Yeah.

Brooke: Alright, well, I think we've given them all the best advice.

Christian: Time to bring the other son in.

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Brooke: We're going to bring the other son in. I think what you've said is good. I think you turned out great. I think you were a great kid, even though you did all of the naughty things. And so, if those parents out there have kids that are doing the naughty things, don't freak out.

Christian: They have to go through it and, I mean, as long as nothing permanent ends up from it, then they need to understand...

Brooke: That's the rub, right?

Christian: Yeah, that's the risk that they take. It's like, having sex, you risk getting someone pregnant and that's the rest of your life, you know, no school after that, no sports after that. I mean, you are working and taking care of kids. So even with drugs, you OD one time or...

Brooke: That's it.

Christian: So you just need to be careful and, like, be very careful how you hang out with, because your friends do influence you a lot more than you think.

Brooke: Alright, thank you, I love you. Well alright, now we have my other son, who is a year younger by 14 months, Connor Castillo.

Connor: Hi. I'm ready.

Brooke: You ready, alright. So I'm going to ask him the same questions, so that will be fascinating to see what his answers are compared to his brother and he had a very different experience but the exact same parents. So, let's see what his thoughts are. So, first question, what is the hardest part of being a kid?

Connor: The hardest part of being a kid is probably learning to grow emotionally, because I was very self-conscious throughout all of my middle school and early high school.

Brooke: Do you think you're the only one that was self-conscious?

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Connor: No, I think everyone is, but some people just hide it better than others.

Brooke: Yeah, what were you self-conscious about?

Connor: I don't know, I wasn't the fittest kid when I was younger. I was kind of short and a little chubby, so my soccer team didn't really help. Like, I was always the slowest one too. But it wasn't like that at school I was always, like, worried about being that cool kid or whatever, but definitely growing out of that was the hardest part for me growing up.

Brooke: How did you grow out of it, do you think?

Connor: Using the Model and all that actually.

Brooke: Oh that is a good answer. I didn't even pay him to say that.

Connor: I just thought about how much really you thinking about yourself really affects you and how you can change other people's thoughts, because you can make up whatever thought you want them to have...

Brooke: You're making it up anyway, right?

Connor: Exactly, you're already making it up, just make it good.

Brooke: That's so awesome. You could go to school and just think everyone was thinking amazing things about you.

Connor: That's what I do now. I go to school and everyone's like, "Oh, there's Connor, I love Connor." And I'm like, "I love me too."

Brooke: That is genius, I love it. Alright, so you think high school is better now?

Connor: Yeah, definitely. I think the next year will be great.

Brooke: Okay, so what's it been like for you with girls?

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Connor: Social media is a good way to, like, you can post something on your story that says, "Who wants to do something this weekend?" And that's like a good way to do stuff with new people.

Brooke: But I mean outside of social media, what's it been like with you for girls? Like, what do we want to, like, warn the younger ones that listen to the podcast about?

Connor: When you're thinking about girls, don't push yourself on someone that doesn't really want you. You need to...

Brooke: We don't mean literally.

Connor: When you're talking to someone, you want to be, like, wanting to be with them as much as they want to be with you. That's the way I kind of do it now is if you talk to me like every other day, then I just realize, I'll just talk to you every other day. But that doesn't mean, don't try to improve your relationship. Just don't be pushing yourself, like, to try to be with this girl who doesn't even care and is always doing something else or is always talking to someone else.

Brooke: Yeah, it's awful, I've watched you do that sometimes. I want to, like, get involved. What advice do you have for parents raising kids?

Connor: Don't interfere. They'll figure it out. They'll figure it out eventually.

Brooke: I mean, what do you think about parents that are like, helicopter parents? That are like, super involved in all their kids' business?

Connor: When you're involved in your kids' business, it makes it so they have to rely on you to step in. I have a friend right now who has never touched a PC before and I gave him one of my older models and now that he has no idea how to work it, he doesn't know what to do. But when I grew up building my PC without any help, I know how to go on Google and find it, but he kept asking me.

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I was let's say, the helicopter parent, trying to be like - I was like, you put this here, put this here, put this here, and then he goes out and he's like, I don't know what to do. So it can be the same way with a social life and all that.

Brooke: Yeah, parents being totally involved. What are kids doing that parents don't know about?

Connor: Probably a lot. It depends on...

Brooke: Do you think parents don't know what's going on with their kids?

Connor: Some kids really do level with their parents like, but usually they're hiding something. Usually they're doing something at school. It could be the smallest thing as even like, swearing at school. Someone will cuss at school and won't cuss at home. And that'll be hiding from their parents. Their parents might think they go to school and they're doing all their work and they don't think about what actually goes on at school. A lot of people also might vape, so that's a - vaping's a thing.

Brooke: It's like, a huge thing.

Connor: Yup.

Brooke: You think a lot of kids are vaping and their parents don't know?

Connor: I think a lot of - 60% of my school vapes and their parents don't know.

Brooke: Wow. So do they vape at school?

Connor: Yeah. They vape at school, they vape at home, whatever they want. Usually all the time.

Brooke: That's crazy. Why do you think that's such a thing? Our thing was smoking.

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Connor: Yeah, it's just new cigarettes. It's new cigarettes but it doesn't smell as much, you can do it whenever. It's like you - alright, so the two most addictive things in the world, your phone and cigarettes, put into one thing. You can just charge it back up whenever you want.

Brooke: Oh, it's like, part of your phone?

Connor: No, it's not part of your phone but it's like, electronic now. So you can take it wherever you want. It's always got battery. It runs out really slowly.

Brooke: Oh, nice. You're making me nervous that you know this.

Connor: No, my friends always - I've seen every single one.

Brooke: So why don't you vape?

Connor: It just gives me a headache. I don't really like it.

Brooke: You were telling me the other day that you watch these kids get addicted to it.

Connor: I do. I've watched it happen throughout high school. If you need one to - just don't. Don't even try it because you'll probably like it. It's like an acquired thing so like, alcohol, you have to do it so much and then you form to it. I just got lucky. I forgot about it in my desk and never touched it again.

Brooke: That's good. So, one of the things that I think is crazy and I'm always making fun of myself that I'm not a very good parent is when I find out that you guys are doing these things and I don't necessarily punish you for them. What do you think about that?

Connor: I don't think you should. I don't think there's any reason to punish your kids for experiencing the world, but it's definitely up to them. I mean, you haven't really parented us but that makes it so we're able to make our own decisions now because having someone over your shoulder talking to you and telling you how to live your life is really not a good thing, especially

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when you go to college. That's why a lot of people like to do drugs or whatever they can in college because they have no one looking over their shoulder now and they're just by themselves.

Brooke: That was my experience in college. When I went to college everyone was going crazy. I was like, have you guys never had a beer? And they were like no, because their parents were so strict when they were in high school.

Connor: If you catch your kid doing it, I mean, you can - I think the new census needs to be explain to your kid what it is. Tell them your opinion on it but don't restrict them down and make it so - give them an ultimatum. This is what I want you to do because they'll probably do the opposite. They'll probably be like, I want to do it now.

Brooke: I know, but as parents that's tough, right?

Connor: It's probably going to be tough because it's your kid and you want them to be the best they can be, but the best you can make them be is by giving him or her his own choice.

Brooke: Right. I think that's super challenging. So what else? Anything else parents don't know about their kids?

Connor: Kids try drugs probably. I mean, if he's a guy that goes out or if he has a lot of friends or he's always getting picked up or leaving a lot. He probably knows what they are. I don't think it will be severe.

Brooke: There's a lot of drugs?

Connor: There's definitely a lot at my school.

Brooke: And they're offered to you a lot?

Connor: Yeah. Some people would invite me to go and hang out with them and drugs would be involved but usually I don't know, it's weird when

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strangers ask me. I don't really mess with that at all. Even in general when people ask me it's just a weird sort of conversation.

Brooke: Right. So what advice do you have for parents? Anything else? I mean, these are all of my clients that have kids that want to be the best parents and the advice that I give them is let your kids be who they are and sometimes you'll be delighted and sometimes you'll be very disappointed. Let's talk about video games.

Connor: Let's do it. Video games. I love video games. I think they're great. I think it's a great way to pass time. I think it's the same thing. Video games are frowned upon in society a lot more than a lot of things but I think having no video games during the week made it just that more amazing for me when I get to play it on the weekends and I think that's why I'm playing so much now. But...

Brooke: Because I used to have it so they couldn't play during the week. They could only play on weekends.

Connor: But video games are pretty great, but...

Brooke: What about parents that are concerned about their kids who play too many video games? Who feel like you're not going to turn out to be great? You're ruining your brain.

Connor: I mean, there's something that everyone likes to do when they're in their free time, whether it be sports - TV is really the same as a video game honestly, except it's more involved and it actually helps you enhance yourself a little bit because you're actually involved in it. I think TV is very similar to video games and when you look at video games, you just think of it as they're watching TV. It's on the same level. I don't think we should frown upon video games as much anymore, but I think it's just as much of an addiction as TV can be.

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Brooke: So, with not being parented strictly and kind of you having a lot of freedom to do what you wanted to do and you being so smart, how do you think you turned out so well?

Connor: Definitely just having to deal with everything myself and like, now when there's a problem, I don't look to anyone. The first thing I think is what can I do to solve this? And then after I go through and see what I can do, then I'll ask you or dad to see what the actual answer is or like for school definitely, I've become so independent that I don't even have to ask you guys for help anymore, which I think is the case for most kids in high school.

Brooke: I think it's hard though because a lot of times parents want to be the person that you come to to solve the problem. And so having your kids solve their own problems - and one of the things that I think is important is let your kid solve the problem themselves. Sometimes they'll do a good job, sometimes they'll do a terrible job, and you may have to step in but giving them the opportunity to fail I think is the most important thing you can do with your kids.

I think a lot of - especially with grades. Never giving the kid an opportunity to fail because you're always on their grades, they don't learn the process of failure.

Connor: I think definitely you should have a punishment for grades. That's one thing that I - because kids in my school, they're like, I could do this but I don't want to - I don't care, I don't try.

Brooke: Because their parents just don't care?

Connor: They don't care. They're like, you got a C, good job. But now you tell me to get an A and now it's just become the standard of the way I go to school, the way I present myself at school. But the way a parent should be is more like a guide. You shouldn't tell them where to be, but if you're taking someone scuba diving and they know nothing and you're like, constantly with them, constantly adjusting everything for them, they can't do anything

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by themselves. They'll be stuck. They'll drown. They'll be by themselves. Instead of teaching them how so they can be their own independent - they should be more independent as they get older for sure.

Brooke: So most - you were telling me the other day that a lot of kids hate their parents or so mad at their parents all the time. They're fighting with their parents all the time. What do you think the reason that is?

Connor: I don't know. Just someone overlooking them, another authority. They think of it as I think as sort of like a teacher. But yeah, someone guiding you through or telling you what to do and what you can't do, I think that's a lot of parents. Like, you can't go out this night, you can't do this this night, and I don't know, disagreements are probably a huge thing. But I think they'll eventually grow out of it as they grow older.

Brooke: See, I had to laugh at my own parenting because I feel like I was - my parents were strict and I always tried to like, tell them what they wanted to hear all the time. So I didn't want to be that kind of parent. So you obviously - you oftentimes, if you didn't like the way you were parented, you try to be a different kind of parent.

And I think it's hilarious. I laugh because I think you guys both turned out great and just because I didn't parent you very much. So it's like, who knew that was going to turn out so well. And you know, there are certain times where you were punished for things and there were things where I didn't even need to punish you, and I think that's important too.

Sometimes when your kids make their own mistakes, you just need to acknowledge that you know and they know that that was not a good idea, and sometimes that's punishment enough. Because Christian was just saying like, if the reason they're not doing it is because you told them not to, they're not learning that lesson internally.

Connor: Exactly. There's a lot going on in my head when I was like, you were telling me to do something or like, now it's all - I don't even think as like a parent, when I go out and I wanted to get my oil changed, I didn't

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even feel the need to like, check in with you guys like, it was just all by myself. And I feel like that's how every kid should be and every kid should learn that and...

Brooke: Be able to manage it.

Connor: Be able to manage themselves a lot more.

Brooke: Yeah, I like it. But I think it's interesting because do you feel like you could - is there any time you don't feel like you could call us?

Connor: No.

Brooke: You could call us for anything?

Connor: I feel like if I was in serious trouble, I could call you for anything.

Brooke: Yeah, so I think that's the balance too. It's not like, total neglect that you have to do everything on your own. It's you're capable of doing everything on your own. But if you need us, we're here.

Connor: Yeah, you're definitely there for me if I was like, ever in serious trouble. You'd probably be the first person I call.

Brooke: That's good. What do you think about parents that worry about their kids all the time? A lot of my clients just sit around and worry.

Connor: Do you worry about your significant other going out?

Brooke: Some of us do.

Connor: Some people do?

Brooke: You know what? It's if they don't trust them, isn't it?

Connor: Yeah, it's definitely a trust thing. You have to talk to your kid. You need to level with your kid and treat them as like, an adult. Like, don't be condescending. That's what I mean. But just respect them on the same

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level. They are still growing and you still have to mentor them and make sure they know the rights and wrongs, but you do need to still have that same level of respect that they're still able to make the same decisions you are every day and they still are making the same decisions every day.

Like, they're still making the decisions to do well in school, do not well in school, so it's definitely a respect thing, I think. If you really worry about your kid, you need to level with them and tell them I really worry about you, and I want to make sure that you're doing well and you're still on the right track to succeed.

Brooke: That's such a good point because I think that's a conversation we probably need to have but instead, we try to control. We try and say you have to stay here and you can't do that and you're messing up your life, and then it creates a distance between the parent and the kid.

Connor: Then it definitely becomes a how do I - it's like dealing with a boss instead of someone that works with you. You're trying to work around your boss or like when I'm always trying to find a way to get in between the parent or sneak around. Always sneaking around, then there's so much more to worry about instead of leveling with your kid and having that same level of respect to say okay, if you're leaving, you need to come back by this time.

Brooke: Well, and the thing for me is like, if someone's going to go and drink and they tell me I'm going to go to a party and I'm going to drink and I will call you if I need a ride, I worry so much less than if I think my kid is lying to me. Because then I don't know what is going on. But you know, if you want your kids to tell you the truth, that's some of the truths that you have to hear sometimes.

Connor: Yeah, but there's definitely seeing your kid, it's different because it's your kid. You don't expect them to be doing all these things that you used to do or you used to sneak around your parents but...

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Brooke: That's a really good point. We don't expect our kids to be doing what we did.

Connor: But then they're doing it, like, how could you?

Brooke: So true. It's so true. I just said that to one of my friends. She's like, I can't believe that they're smoking. And I was like, what? Of course you can, that's exactly what we were doing at that age.

Connor: Believing they will turn out fine is another thing. You just have to be confident that you parented them well enough and guided them well enough to be able to make their own decisions.

Brooke: I always knew you'd both turn out fine. And that's a thing that I just believed on purpose. So I think that that's actually pretty wise advice that you're giving there.

Connor: And less parenting - you never really parented me on school. You just told me that you need to get good grades. So being able to balance myself on going on my phone in class versus paying attention in class is still a thing I have to deal with but I'm able to do it better now and like, I can do my own projects and everything like that. I'm able to go get my own supplies. But there's...

Brooke: Why do you think I wanted you to get good grades? Because you know how I feel about school. Not a huge fan.

Connor: I think because you knew it was easy and you knew it's just a game. It's just you write down, you color the pictures, you make a cool little project, you hand it to your teacher, I give you a 90, it's fine, you move on.

Brooke: Well, and I remember telling you - I can't remember, you were always so smart in school and you'd always just yell the answer out in class and they would get mad because they wanted you to show the work and we were so frustrated and I remember telling you, "You're going to learn how to play this game of life because you're always going to have to pay your taxes, you're going to have to go to the DMV, you're going to have to

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wait in line in stores, there's lots of times where you're going to have to do stuff that doesn't seem smart. But it's part of functioning in society." And that's kind of how I feel about grades.

And I knew that you were capable of getting As. If I felt like you were capable of getting Cs and that would have been your best effort, I genuinely would have said that's the baseline. So I love that you've gotten straight As.

Connor: I don't think school is like the bar either. I think if your kid doesn't do well in school, I don't think that means he's going to turn out a failure.

Brooke: That's right. That's really important.

Connor: It's just they are not good at that certain thing. That school really just could be harder for some people and easier for some people. They can just look at a review and be able to ace the test the next day.

Brooke: That's been very nice for you, huh?

Connor: Yeah, pretty great.

Brooke: It's nice to be super smart. In school smart. But there's so much more to life than just that, right? Alright, so tell us about your future.

Connor: I don't know what's for my future. I'm going to Bard College in Massachusetts next year. I'm going to go ahead and try it out for the year and see how it takes me, but it's definitely going to be a scenery change from California to great weather, to hot and raining, and then to actually just cold.

Brooke: Freezing cold.

Connor: Just freezing cold.

Brooke: It'll be good for you, right?

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Connor: It'll be great. Meet new people. I think it'll be great. I think it's the first step.

Brooke: Yeah. You don't know if you want to keep going to college?

Connor: I think that might be the next step because I don't know what I'm going to do.

Brooke: Are you worried about your future? Are you worried about being able to make money?

Connor: Honestly, I had this thought yesterday. I was like, what's the worst case? I work at Taco Bell and live in an apartment? So what? That's not the worst thing ever and there's always something I can do. There's always something I can try and it's not like I'm going to die if I don't become a billionaire, next Bill Gates. But it's definitely striving towards to be successful. Even if you are working a nine to five, there's still a couple more hours every day that you could spend pushing your goals that you really want.

Brooke: Is that important to you?

Connor: Definitely. But I haven't really worked on it so far and I've just been using school right now to try to figure it out because I really don't know what I want to do. I think right now is just the try phase. Try...

Brooke: That's how you figure out what you want. You try a bunch of stuff and you figure out what you don't want.

Connor: And the internet's a wide place. So there's definitely a lot of things you can try. There's a lot of platforms you can try but...

Brooke: And you're already running Facebook ads. So if all else fails, I know a couple people that'll hire you to do that.

Connor: Exactly. Facebook ads for life coaches.

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Brooke: Alright, anything else you want to tell our listeners?

Connor: It'll be okay. No matter what really happens, as long as it's not the craziest thing ever, just think about how it'll really affect you and how really - I always think, in five years will this really matter? I was late to school and I was about to get a detention. In five years will I really think about that and think about that as the worst day of my life? Probably not.

Brooke: Probably not. It's all going to be okay.

Connor: It's all going to be okay.

Brooke: I love it. Alright, thanks for coming on the podcast.

Connor: Thank you.

Brooke: I love you.

Connor: Love you too.

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