

## Using Love and Logic to Raise Resilient Kids – Dr. Charles Fay with Dave Asprey – #832

Announcer:

Bulletproof Radio, a state of high performance.

Dave Asprey:

You're listening to Bulletproof Radio with Dave Asprey. Today's going to be a fun show, because I get a lot of questions from The Upgrade Collective, which is my membership and mentorship group that you should check out. In fact, there's a bunch of Upgrade Collective members logged in live as I'm recording this podcast, able to answer questions or ask questions at the end of the show. I get a lot of questions about parenting and, "Dave, what do you do for parenting?" I think I'm a pretty good parent, but you know what? Every parent thinks they're a pretty good parent at least some of the time, even if they're not.

Dave:

How would I know if I'm good given my sample size is I had two parents? I'm going to compare myself to them. Everyone says I'm going to do better than my parents, which usually means you do exactly what your parents did even more or the exact opposite way your parents did even more. You guys have heard me talk about being vicarious, vaccine industry curious, in the middle, where I'm going to pay attention to all the different data sources, then make my own decision. It's hard to be a curious parent, because, well, you just haven't seen enough. Then what you do is you go to an expert who has seen a lot of parenting and studied it and say, "All right, well, what's going to work? What's not going to work?"

Dave:

Then you look for a believable, trustworthy expert. I think I found someone for you today. The reason I think so is I recently interviewed Tana Amen about her amazing book. You guys know Daniel Amen very well, because I think he's been on the show four or five times. This is a guy who absolutely changed my life when his work... Change Your Brain, Change Your Life was his first big book. He showed me how to hardware a problem in my brain. It wasn't a moral failing. It wasn't a lack of willpower or not being smart enough, it was that my brain wasn't working, and I could hack that versus hack being a bad person.

Dave:

You can hack that too, because you're probably not a bad person, but you might think you're a bad parent some of the time, and have the guilt and shame that everyone has, even if you're mostly enlightened. Not that that's me, but even some of the leaders in personal development that I'm friends with, they're like, "I don't know if I did that right as a parent, but I did my best." Both Daniel and Tana said, "Dave, you gotta talk to this guy. He has something called love and logic, and he focuses on raising resilient kids." Given that, well, we're telling our kids to do all sorts of nonsensical stuff like wear a mask only when you're standing on your left leg, but not your right leg, and they know it's dumb, right?

Dave:

The rules are not consistent. Kids hate it when adults lie to them, so they're already stressed. That hurts their resilience, so I figured you guys could use this now more than ever. I've got an 11 and 14-year-old. I could use this now. That's why we have Charles Fay, PhD, who created Love and Logic as recommended by one of my favorite brain hackers on the planet, so there you go. There's an intro so to speak, but it's

based on years of research, clinical experience, and it's all about resilience. Charles, welcome to the show, man.

Charles Fay, Ph.D.:

Thank you so much.

Charles:

Thank you so much. I have to say there are plenty of times, I'll be honest with you, where I go to my wife, Monica. We have three kids. We have a 34-year-old son who's out and about, and a 24-year-old son who's out and about, and a 14-year-old son who a lot of times wants to be out and about. I go to her, and I say, "Monica, after the way things went in our house today, I have no business going out there talking to anybody about parenting." A lot of times, she'll just smile at me and say, "True, but that's what you do, so get out there and do it." The good news is we don't have to be perfect.

Charles:

I want to start with that, that we don't have to be perfect. I mean, nobody is. You know what? Being a great model, which we all know is important, and usually when parenting experts talk about modeling, I start to roll back in our heads because we're like, "Oh, great, now he's going to tell me that I have to be a better person and behave." Well, truly, modeling is so important. Of course, we want to do the best we can to be good people, but boy, if we can model making some mistakes. Now, I wonder if any of you are good at that, modeling, making mistakes so that our kids can see us handle it with grace, handle it with some confidence and handle it with, "Hey, I'm going to get back on the horse and try again."

Charles:

I had two very imperfect parents growing up. They follow me everywhere now, because I got to see how much they love me, and I got to see their genuineness. As a result of that, I took their values, and unconsciously stuck them inside of my heart, and so everywhere I go, there they are. That's what I want for you is to have such a tight connection and authentic connection with your kids so that they put you inside of them. They wake up when they're older, and look in the mirror and say, "Oh, man, I'm my dad, or I'm my mom, or I'm both." Modeling is important, but remember... A little sound bite for you, I like to speak in sound bites. Failure is not final. It's informative.

Dave:

One of the things that I've done with my kids for a long time is at night when I'm talking them in is I'll say, "Three things you're grateful for, and then you find something good that happened that day, and then tell me something you failed at today, and then a failure or some of it you worked on doing, you wanted it to happen, and it just didn't happen." Then if they go, "I didn't have any failure. Today, I'm having fails, as we call them." Then I go, "Oh, maybe tomorrow can be a better day because you'll do something hard enough to push you."

Charles:

I love it. I love it.

Dave:

I got that from... Sara Blakely mentioned that a long time ago that her dad did that. She's the founder of Spanx. I'm like, "This is really good," so we added that in probably eight or nine years ago. Is that a good practice? I have no idea. I've never validated it with an expert.

Charles:

Love and Logic, we've been preaching the same thing over and over again, and it goes something like this, "Hope and pray every day that your kids blow it." We gotta be hoping and praying every day that they blow it when the price tag is small. See, when the consequences are still small? A number of things can happen. First of all, so they can learn cause and effect. How many of us know an adult who doesn't quite get that? They don't get that. I make this decision, something else is going to happen, so we hope and pray for those mistakes. I have to hope and pray for the wisdom and self control to let them make those mistakes.

Charles:

[inaudible 00:07:41] to your audience, how many of you can admit at least to yourself that it's hard to allow your kids to maybe get a bad grade on an assignment or maybe forget something they need, and then have to do without it at school or maybe at a practice or something like that? It's hard because we love them. It's a gift. It's a gift. Dave, honestly, what I want is kids who grow to become adults, who if they mess up, they say to themselves, "Hey, messed up. Learn something from that. Move on. That's how we learn."

Dave:

I'm laughing because this morning, my son said, "I can't find white socks." He has a school uniform. I'm like, "Sounds like a problem." "Daddy, I'm going to have to wear mismatched socks to school today." Maybe you should do the laundry. I don't know. Not my problem, but then he went, and he woke up mom who knew where the white socks were.

Charles:

Yes. You said something so important, Dave. You really hit it on the head. Whose problem is it? I mean, ask in all relationships, whose problem is this? We gotta be able to offload problems onto the shoulders of the people who really need to own them, and we do it with love, but we do our friends, our family no favor when we're solving all their problems for them.

Dave:

This is something that all parents do. When our kids feel pain, we feel their pain, because we're connected, because of mirror neurons, because, gee, it's almost like Mother Nature wired us that way so that we would protect our young instead of selling them when they got irritating. We're innately wired to feel their pain, and we feel it when they suffer greatly from the things, so before we think about it, we're going to intervene and help them do whatever the thing is that they really could have done themselves. How does a parent learn to not do that?

Charles:

Well, I believe so much of it is immersing ourselves in this paradigm. I'm biased, but the Love and Logic paradigm is a great paradigm, because every story you hear in the materials, the books, the audios, the courses that we have, every story, every example, every part of it reinforces this paradigm shift. Dave, I really think it is a huge paradigm shift that mistakes are great. We're going to rescue if the mistakes are

too big. Life and death, we're going to jump in, of course, and save our kids, but immersing ourselves in that language.

Charles:

It reminds me of a mom who was... She was driving around the car, and a little kid in the backseat about three years old in the car seat. Mom drives past the exit she's supposed to take, and she's beaten up on herself like, "Oh, why did I drive past that exit?" Here's the little girl in the backseat, "Oh, that's so sad, mommy. That's okay. You're learning." Mom is thinking, "Yes. Yes." That's where we don't want to be. It really does require that immersion, that repetition. The reason that little kid knew love and logic somewhat better than her mother did was because everywhere they went in the car, mom had a plan on the stereo.

Charles:

This is not a conspiracy or something that we're trying to do sneaky against our kids. It's something that the whole family can learn.

Dave:

What's the age when kids first pick this up?

Charles:

Oh, my goodness, I saw my kids... In terms of learning the basic skills, I've seen kids learn starting at about age 10 months. I'll share a little story with you about that. Love and Logic, by the way, is really big on loving actions. I mean, how many times do we run into parents, friends, relatives, neighbors, co workers, never ourselves, right? But the other parents who talk a lot, but they never take any action, "For crying out loud, if you keep doing that such and such..." but there's never any action, and the kids just tune them out, right?

Charles:

Love and Logic is more about very few words, loving actions, and it can start very early. I remember my son, Cody, is 10 months of age, and he's crawling across the carpet towards something he's not supposed to have touched. We're at the grandparents house. I like to teach parents this signal with little kids, "Oh, oh," just the little up oh, oh. Just sing it oh, oh. See, it's hard to yell when you're singing, oh, oh, and then walk over, and just pick them up, and stick them in your lap with their face facing away from you. Let them have a little fit. It's okay if they're upset, and we put them down.

Charles:

He crawled over about three, four more times, and we just repeated uh-oh right back in the lab. We got home, and he was heading off to something that he shouldn't have. I said to him, "Uh-oh." He just laid down in the middle of the floor, and pounded on the carpet, because in his mind, he had this limit that was getting ingrained. See, when we set limits, kids learn self limits. See, they gotta have them from outside first. Otherwise, they'll never develop them from the outside or from the inside out, I mean. Self control is so important.

Dave:

You can start even before they're a year old with just a little thing like that. Let's say that what he's crawling to is painful but not deadly or maiming. You said, "Oh, would you let him keep going?"

Charles:

Here is the... He's crawling very gradually, and he's going to touch something that is really going to hurt. Maybe it's really hot, but it's not going to cause any damage, I mean, but it's going to hurt. A love and logic parent at the very most might say, "Oh, I'm not sure I'd do that. That might hurt." Then after they say that, they go to prayer, "Please let him touch it."

Dave:

That's dark, but it's also perfect.

Charles:

Please let him touch it, please. Please, give me the strength to allow it to happen. Of course, parents, I think we're all on the same page here, nothing that's going to have serious consequences for the kid, and serious damage, but really painful. I know awful lot of kids who've done that. Well, Dave, how many additional times did those kids do that after that experience? What do you think?

Dave:

They're still going to do it, at least as far as I can tell. We put those little foam things up on the dangerous edges when our kids are really young. If there's one exposed edge in a room, they have radar. They'll find it, and they'll just bang their head on it.

Charles:

Of course.

Dave:

I swear that if you did a statistical analysis, kids look for those things, and even though gravity is one of the best teachers ever for young kids, because they fall down. They hit things. They keep doing it. It seems like the 10,000 repetition thing. How to not lose your mind as a parent is, I think, part of this. What's going on with all that?

Charles:

Well, so much of it is because they're little, and their brains aren't fully developed. I mean, that's the truth, and so it's good to take a lot of repetition. But the more real experiences they have that are safe, the better. Let's talk about that. We look around our house, and, again, we childproof the things that are going to cause the real damage. We don't hesitate to do that, but we leave enough temptations out there so that kids can actually learn. I mean, they need to learn the laws of physics. Kids can learn the laws of physics, gravity, kinetic energy, velocity and the effects of kinetic energy when they suddenly come to a quick stop.

Charles:

They can learn all that stuff, by the time they're two years of age, if we stand out of the way, and when they do it, we model a sense of confidence. See-

Dave:

How do you model confidence?

Charles:

Well, two different types of parents, let's look at them. It's fun to look at two different types of parents dropping a kid off at daycare. Let's just use that for an example. That's an exciting place to hang out. I love watching kids being dropped off at daycare, but I don't like police looking at me strangely, so I stopped the practice, but-

Dave:

That's totally best.

Charles:

We have one parent driving up, and the kid is doing what kids do, "I don't want to go. I want to be with you, mommy. I miss you so much. I love you. I want to stay. I don't want to go," and the parents feel they're horrible, so the parent's saying, "You're going to have so much fun. You're going to have snack, and I hear you'll play a lot of games. I did background checks on your teachers, and they're okay, and you're going to have such a great day, and you're going to have so ..." "But I don't..." "Now, honey, you're going to have fun." That's one parent.

Charles:

Here's the second parent. Kid does the same thing. This parent feels equally guilty, but the parent knows that kids need great airline pilots. I mean, I don't want to get on a triple seven, and have the pilot on the announcement saying, "I'm freaking out up here, man. There's a lot of buttons, and it's really bumpy." I don't want that kind of pilot, right? This parent, when the kid says, "I don't want to go," they say something like this, "Have a great day, sweetie," and then they lay tracks out of that parking lot. They do not exceed the speed limit, but they get to that speed limit pretty quick.

Charles:

If you have a kid who won't get out of the car, you might want to call ahead and say, "Hey, I have a kid, and by the way, she's choosing to go to school in her pajamas this morning. See, I told her we can either go with your clothes on your body or your clothes in a bag, and we're leaving precisely when my timer goes off on my phone, and here is... I'm going to pull up. She's going to have pajamas on. I'm going to have a bag with her clothes, and please help me pry her gently yet forcefully out of the car, and I'm going to leave quickly." Now, whenever I stand in front of early childhood educators, and ask them which kid was the happiest during the day, it was always the kid where the parent said, "Goodbye. Love you," very few words right out of the parking lot.

Charles:

We're talking not just about little kids today. We're also talking about teenagers, right? They need the same kind of response from us where we're compassionate, but we model strength. Can I tell you a story about that?

Dave:

Please.

Charles:

By the way, we're not on my outline. Are you okay with that?

Dave:

You had an outline? Geez.

Charles:

Well, I felt obligated, because you're an important guy and-

Dave:

It's a conversation. It's just there's only a few hundred thousand people listening. No pressure.

Charles:

I love that I'm going off the outline. This is a true story. See, I grew up in a ranching community, and ranching communities, all the dogs were Border Collies, Blue Heelers, dogs that ran after things. They'd chase everything. They herded everything, including cars. My dad was of the variety that believed that kids needed character building experiences. Now, what's a character building experience? Is doing something hard that you don't want to do, but it's good, and then afterwards, you say to yourself, "I'm strong. I'm capable, and I did something good." He'd engineer all these character building experiences for me, one of which was playing my baritone at all the different places like Elks lodges in the small towns and the rotary clubs and all those places, VFWs.

Charles:

I'd go and play those little recitals. Well, got my baritone in the car, and there's Buster. Now, Buster's running after a sob. The sob's coming down the road, and Buster knows that anything that looks as strange as a sob, there's gotta be evil, so he tears off after this thing. He's going to herd it back where it belongs, and he gets hit by this car right in front of me. He manages to stumble himself up the driveway. I still remember kneeling over him and petting him. My dad ran out, and Buster died right there. It was a horrible thing.

Charles:

My dad loved that dog, too. They love me. My dad cried just a little bit. This is a silent tear, and he said, "Son, I'm so sorry that happened." I remember how strong his arms were when he hugged me. He said, "I know how much you love Buster, but son, it's time to go." I said, "Where?" He says, "Well, we promised that you were going to play a solo over there at the Elks Lodge." I said, "I can't do it. My dog just died." He said, "Son, when we get back, we're going to take care of them, but I know you're strong enough to handle this."

Charles:

I didn't know how to feel about that as a kid, but I rode with him, and I played that solo. I remember seeing him looking at me just... I could tell proud he was of me. We got home, and we cried together. We put Buster a rest in a good way. That stuck with me, and never once did I think my dad was mean or uncaring, but he taught me that we can get through tough times, times that almost seem unbearable. We can get through tough times when we're also focusing on serving other people, and not just ourselves.

Charles:

In my outline that I put down here, there were three things, and I'll just mention them real quick. The first is if we want to rebuild our families, raise really strong, resilient, capable kids, there's gotta be a relationship. The kids have gotta look at us and think, "My mom, my dad, they're strong, and they're also firm." The second piece of it is that kids need limits. They need to know that we love them enough to give them the boundaries. We can talk more about how to do all these things, a little overview for you, but my dad had set a limit with me there, "We're going."

Dave:

Your dad's a recognized expert in building discipline with kids and all that, so you were raised by a parenting expert and all of that. That's a pretty powerful example where you're saying, "Okay, integrity in your word, you're going to do what you said you're going to do, and bad things happened, and you can still deal with it." I think some listeners hearing that are going, "Your dad was cruel. He could have just given you a break," but you're a grown adult now with your own kids, and you look back on that as it was the right call.

Charles:

It was definitely the right call, and it had to do with how we did it.

Dave:

What did he do right?

Charles:

What did he do right?

Dave:

What did he do right?

Charles:

What did he do right? Well, first of all, all the things that he did way before Buster ever came along. See, what my dad did right is he was there for me a lot, and he spent a lot of time with me not doing anything purposeful. He believed and still does. By the way, he lives next door to me. We're good friends to this very day. He believes that being with people is being present is more important than doing stuff. I mean, we can have both, but how many times, Dave, do we get pulled into this idea that we gotta be accomplishing something all the time, or we have to be doing some structured activity, we gotta be entertaining the kids?

Charles:

You know what the kids want? They want us to be there with them. Daniel Amen is so great, and really models this, I think, in a spectacular fashion. It talks about special time. That is where we just hang out with the kid, and there's no shoulds or coulds or maybes or whys. There's just us hanging out next to the kid, not saying much at all. He did a lot of that. He did a lot of empathy with me, and that's a big piece of Love and Logic. The empathy sounds like this, "I can't imagine how hard this must be for you. Oh, and you just forgot to do your chores, right? We had talked about those before, and you had your little list,

and now you're asking me to drive you someplace you really want to go. Boy, that's rough. Well, perhaps next time when I see those things get..."

Charles:

See, so the empathy is not, "You poor thing, don't worry about it. There's no accountability." The empathy is, "Wow, I really care about you. I'm feeling for you, but you know what, I believe that you're strong enough to handle what life serves up for you, and I believe that you're strong enough to handle the poor decisions that you make, and those consequences that come as a result." I have to say those two things were so powerful in my life growing up with him up to that point, and I grew up, again, in this family where the show must go on.

Charles:

As I-

Dave:

Powerful words.

Charles:

As I get older... Again, Dave, I can certainly see how some people would hear that story, and just be heartbroken. It's a heartbreaking story. I mean, my dog is like right next to me right now, and I love her. I was just devastated, but are those things going to happen in our children's lives?

Dave:

[crosstalk 00:29:42].

Charles:

One of the things that... When I talk to so many people all over the world, and so many people who've lived many, many decades, really wise people, what they'll say is that they're really concerned about the number of people who can't really handle adversity.

Dave:

Hold on, do we need a trigger warning for this part of the conversation?

Charles:

Probably. There is great hope. I mean, you were talking about some really deep stuff, aren't we? You know why I like to talk about deep stuff? Because I want my life to be meaningful, and for people who have kids-

Dave:

There you go.

Charles:

... who go out there and they make it through the hard stuff, and so much of the time... I'll share another little story with you. Listeners often tell me they like stories. Well, this lady says to me, "My son lost. He lost two and a half coats every school year."

Dave:

My kids do that, drive me insane.

Charles:

How do you lose two and a half coats? Is one of them a vest or something? Anyway, she says that, "I took the Love and Logic course, and the Love and Logic course basically taught me to stand beside my kids rather than be cute between them and the world. Standing beside them means that if something's really dangerous or will be traumatic, I step in and protect them. I mean, I'm like a mother bear. I'll do that if my kids are in danger. But much of the time, I step back and allow them to handle life and learn from it."

Charles:

He comes home one day, and he says, "Mom, somebody stole my coat." They're always stolen. They're never lost, right? She practices her empathy. She says, "Oh, honey. Oh, that's rough." "My teacher doesn't even care." "Oh, that's gotta be rough. What do you think you're going to do?" I'll lock in that question, listeners. What do you think you're going to do? When somebody comes to you with a problem, what do you think you're going to do? Real loving, "Well, I'm telling you what I... You need to buy me a new coat."

Charles:

Mom says, "Oh, would you like to hear some ideas about how you might solve that problem?" He says, "What?" She says, "Well, some kids decide to get all their money together, and they ask their mom to take them to the mall, and they buy a brand new coat with that money." You know what the kid said? "Coats are expensive. Forget it." Then he runs in his room, and she feels terrible. Isn't it interesting that she's doing the right thing, in my opinion, right? Building a strong kid, but she feels horrible about it.

Dave:

I wouldn't feel horrible about that one. I'd be like, "Don't lose your next coat." Does that make me a monster of a parent? "You earn that. Use your allowance."

Charles:

It just makes parenting easier for you, Dave. Anyway, he comes back out. Now, he's talking like this. Now, any of you ever hear your kid talk like this? It's like, "What?" "I can't hear you?" "Will you take me down to the thrift shop, so I can buy a coat?" She said, "Well, are you sure you want to do that? I mean, some kids just wear a lot of shirts for the rest of the year. How would that work?" "Well, this is Michigan." She gets to the car with him, and drives him down to the thrift store. He buys this old coat himself. They're riding home, and now he's showing everybody this coat.

Charles:

It's pretty tattered looking. By the way, they happen to be a family that has some money, and so people are like, "Well, what happened? Are you having problems with your business," things like that. Mom

said, "That coat, that old worn out coat that he bought for \$3 is a greater gift to him than all of the expensive things we ever bought him for holidays." The point here, friends, is that we often talk about adversity as being a really hard thing, which it is, but there's a flip side of it.

Charles:

How does it feel when you see yourself working through it, and you get to the other side? We steal that from people, don't we? We steal the struggle, and then as a result, we also steal the tremendous sense of confidence and joy that they can have knowing, "Hey, I got what it takes. I can live this life. I can be honorable, and solve the problems I face." That's resiliency for you.

Dave:

What a great story and what a great lesson that is for parents and for kids. One of the things that I've found is my kids enter their preteen and teen years, and it's well documented. Kids listen less than less to you, and more and more to their peers. Some of their peers have been taught to be victims, and as soon as something bad happens to them, they're entitled to a whole bunch of stuff, the whole victim culture. I would just say high anxiety, high fear peers. As a parent, what do you do when your kids start hanging out with a bunch of kids who don't have any resilience, and start picking that stuff back?

Charles:

Well, we're working through that right now with one of ours, and so this is really personal. It's a great discussion. First of all, the basic goal is for them to work it out, not for us to work it out. See, we're going to facilitate them working it out, rather than us working it out. See, because if we work it out, is it really part of their being? No. That's one basic principle that I have to say is very important. There's a lot of times where there'll be all this drama associated with hanging out with the kids, and then our kids will come home, or after they visit with a kid on Instagram or whatever, they are having a trauma moment and hysteria and all that.

Charles:

I think it's very important for us to set a limit with them that sounds something like this, "You're more than welcome to hang out with me and your mom right here in this room as long as we're being treated with great respect, and we're not having to hear about negative things. I sure hope you can stay because we love you," but this is a no drama zone, and that-

Dave:

Setting a no drama zone for your kids is really cool. I like that idea.

Charles:

No drama zone. We have to come across like that, because sometimes... Here's the deal. I'll admit it, my mirror neurons are too active sometimes, so the kid gets all this drama, hysteria. Then I get hysterical about their hysteria, "Why? Well, why do you hang out with kids like that?" Oh, my goodness, I'm just modeling what I don't want. I want to be real matter of fact, but love it. Hey, I hang out with kids. I do extra things for kids when I know it's going to be pleasant for me, and it's just not pleasant when I just keep hearing this and that about so and so and this about that and all of the anxiety and worry, just not fun for me.

Charles:

That's part of the message. A big part of Love and Logic is this, take really great care of yourself in loving ways. I mean, when I was a kid, I loved those movies. They were the old westerns, and some guy's horse didn't make it or whatever, stuck in Arizona desert crawling along, "Water. Water." That's like many of our kids now, in a desert crawling, begging for somebody to give them the leadership, that life-sustaining water that they need in order to be successful. I don't know how to give somebody life-sustaining water if my bucket is totally empty.

Dave:

It's the self care modeling self care.

Charles:

It's huge. You know what, do we want our kids to be able to learn how to distance themselves from unhealthy peers? Of course, we do. Do we want them to know how to take care of themselves around unhealthy peers? Absolutely. How well does it work if we're a doormat or teaching them to be one? My son, Mark, now, he's 24. When he was little, we were constantly practicing. We call them enforceable statements Love and Logic does. It's essentially where we describe what we're going to do, rather than tell the kid what to do, "Oh, you feel free to keep the toys that you pick up, and dinner is served until such and such a time."

Charles:

"I allow teenagers to drive my car when I don't have to worry about when they get home or where they are, and I'll listen when your voice is calm like mine," things like that. One of the things, one of the rules we had is, "Oh, you get to play with us and hang out with us when you're being sweet to us." Well, he had a friend over, had a little play date, and he's four. They're in his bedroom. I sneak around the corner because I just love to watch little kids play when they don't know an adult's watching. They're having a good time, little Matchbox cars on the floor. Before long, the friend has taken my son's Matchbox cars, and smashing them against the baseboard.

Charles:

Here's little Mark, little Marky. He's got a baseball cap on. He takes it off. He puts all the Matchbox cars in his baseball cap. He puts it back on his head. He turned to this little kid, and he says, "I play with kids who are nice to my stuff," and he just walked out the room. I thought, "How did he learn that?" By hearing us say it over and over again.

Dave:

Wow.

Charles:

So much about how kids handle peer influences is determined by how well we take care of ourselves. Now, there's something else. You mentioned something about problems. Whose problem is it? When I solve my kid's problems as a habitual response all the time, you know what I'm doing? I'm renting them a life-

Dave:

And teaching them helplessness.

Charles:

I'm renting them a life. It's not really their life that they have. It's just it's a rental, and how do people treat rentals? With not as much seriousness or care. Rental life or real life, I mean, when a kid is in a position and somebody says, "Hey let's do this crap. Let's go down to this part of town and hang out. Let's break into the store," what do I want going on in my kid's head? Rental life that I can just trade in and get another one, or real life? I want the kid to know it's a real life, and that's when we have to have some very brief but loving but serious conversations.

Charles:

Usually, I like to have those in the car. Drive it along.

Dave:

So they can't run away?

Charles:

Yeah. Drive it along. Son, aren't you fortunate to have so and so for a friend? "Well, what do you mean?" "Well, I was just thinking how fortunate you are to have so and so as a friend, because you're going to have so much practice learning how to keep yourself out of trouble. I just think that's just fantastic." Some of these other kids who always make good decisions, they don't teach you anything about life, and then you shut up. "Well, what do you mean by that?" "Oh, just nevermind. I don't want to be one of those lecturing parents."

Charles:

See, you throw something out, and then you let it percolate. It's like a great farmer, plant the seed. Walk away. Great farmer knows, "I plant the seed, but I'm not the one who makes it grow." Another little conversation, "Son, daughter, do you think that your life's going to be gratifying and joyful or not so gratifying and joyful if you hang around with people who treat you like a doormat?" "No, you're just using that psychology on me." "Well, I was just curious about that," and then you shut your mouth, a little seed.

Charles:

Not a huge bag of seeds, just one little seed, lots of little seeds. "Son, I know that some of your friends really liked to drink, and then they drive around after they've been drinking. Whose life is really going to be affected if that ends poorly? I love you dearly, but whose-

Dave:

That's it. Wow.

Charles:

Son, and by the way, if you're the one who's driving, I want to make you a promise, and that is that I promise you, this is my solemn oath to you that if we were ever to need your mom and I legal assistance because of the DUI, we would never expect you to pay the car, and take care of [crosstalk 00:45:39].

Dave:

That is brilliant parenting, right? That's a ninja move.

Charles:

It helps when you're like me. Honestly, we don't drink and drive, so... I call it a dynamic equilibrium. Parenting is a dynamic equilibrium. We're always thinking, "Okay, how can I be really loving and make sure that my kids are well taken care of, and rescue them when they need to be rescued?" Then on the other side of the line is how do I allow them to have enough struggles in life, have enough accountability so that they are strong, and strong people with great character? As the years have gone by, I've realized that it's not a system. It's not something like steps you can follow.

Charles:

It's a process of keeping our eye on that line, and doing the very best we can, and using the best judgment we have in that situation, given the dynamics of the situation. If we are working on that equilibrium, chances are we're going to make mistakes, but overall, we're going to be real successful.

Dave:

All right, I want to talk about bullying. I've had so many entrepreneurs who come through my 40 years of Zen neurofeedback program, and this is one where you go deep, and you can edit emotional patterns, so you have to talk about them, so you get this peek inside it. It's really common for people to go, "Oh my God, I just realized I've driven to be this unhappy, but very successful entrepreneur, because I was bullied." How do parents respond most effectively when there's bullying happening at school?

Charles:

Well, the backdrop, the context is always the most important piece. In the backdrop, the context is the kid has no doubt in their mind that they are loved, because they are loved. The parents just love them. It's unconditional. You don't have to earn it. You can't lose it. You're just loved. What a gift that is when we can have that. That's part of the context. The other part of the context is that the kid has had a lot of experiences with cause and effect and seeing that they are capable of making decisions, capable of handling hardships.

Charles:

I'm truly loved unconditionally. I don't have to prove anything to anybody. I am loved. Secondly, I'm strong. I'm capable. When I have a kid who has those two basic belief systems, they're a little easier to work with over the bully. I would say the first step, if there's steps, is you listen. Truly listening and reflecting feelings, you're never going to go wrong. What you're telling my daughter is that, "There are some girls, and anytime you go and sit down at the lunch table, they just move and then they roll their eyes at you?" "Yeah, they do that?"

Charles:

"Well, that's gotta hurt unbelievable. I mean, tell me, how often is this happening?" I'm having a conversation, and all I'm doing is getting at feelings and trying to understand. I'm not trying to solve the problem. See, too often, we just jump into problem solving mode before we listen. Then things go poorly. Like when our spouse has a bad day, and we want to be good listeners and empathetic, and no information shared whatsoever during that first stage. Hand on the shoulder of the kid, "Just love you. I'm so sad that you're having to go through this stuff," and then I start moving into a little more directive role.

Charles:

Would you like to hear some thoughts? [crosstalk 00:50:30].

Dave:

Absolutely.

Charles:

The kid's interested in hearing it because I've spent time listening.

Dave:

You're getting them... You're soliciting them to ask for advice.

Charles:

Yes, but I'm going to ask permission first. "Son, would you like to hear some ideas about how to handle kids like that? I mean, what do you think?" "Well, I guess okay." "I don't want to be bossy or anything, but I know you're really hurting." Now, some kids, always use that language, some kids or some people decide to. Well, some people decide to trick that kid, and when the kid is hassling them, they say to themselves, "The more upset I get, the more unhealthy power that person has," and they do a good job of acting like a really good actor does. Then they just have something, "Just relax," they say to the kid.

Charles:

We could practice that if you're interested. "Well, that's weird, dad. What do you mean?" Well, there are some kids just... They put on a cool look or relaxed look, and they don't have a lot of eye contact with the bully, but the bully says, "You're just such and such." The kid might say something like, "Oh, I was really wondering about that. Thank you," and then they just wander over, and stand next to an adult or some kids they know will be kind to them, watch out for them, but they don't say anything to that bully right then and there.

Charles:

They might talk to a teacher later on, but they just wander over, and hang out by somebody is going to take good care of that. How do you think that might work? "Oh, it seems weird." Well, it might be weird, and do you think it's possible that it might not work all the time, just like everything else? I always get kids prepared for the fact that sometimes things won't work.

Dave:

What happens then?

Charles:

What do you think you might do if it doesn't work? Well, depending on the bully, some kids decide. Again, this is where judgment really has to come in, parents. Some kids decide to look at that bully, and just say something like this, "That's bullying, and that needs to stop," and they turn away. They walk somewhere where they won't get beat up, because some kids only understand that type of approach. Now, this is a process, but notice what I'm trying to do here. Most of the time, I am going for giving the kid the skills they need in order to handle not just this bully, but all the other bullies they will encounter for the rest of their lives.

Charles:

Because if they run a business, they'll run into bullies. If they work in a business, they'll run into bullies. If they live life, they will run into bullies.

Dave:

It's very true.

Charles:

What's so interesting is when kids have that confidence of knowing that they can handle bullies, they don't get bullied as much. It just oozes out of them. It's like, "Hey, I can handle you. I can have a life." Now, there are times when a parent may need to say something like this. Now, some kids decide that they really are going to need to get some extra help from people at the school, and they're going to ask their parent to go to the school with them, and they're going to talk to the principal principle with their parent there.

Charles:

Now, notice who's still involved in solving the problem, the kid. Now, I'd probably call the principal ahead of time and say, "We got this situation. I'd like to bring my son in, and have him talk directly to you, because I want him to be empowered to know that he can handle himself, and so I just want you to know why I'm probably going to be fairly silent. There's method to the madness here," and then if I need to all throw some things in, but very important for the kid not to be sitting back, the feet up in the air, just glazed over while I'm solving the problem.

Charles:

There are times where we have to go to that level. I have actually seen times where parents have had to go, and this is the last resort, of course, but take some legal action or whatever is required to resolve the issue, but so much of this can be handled with the kid just learning some very simple silly strategies for showing the bully they just aren't bothered so much.

Dave:

I love that.

Charles:

I have a kid. I'll share with you one little fun story. The kid was always hassling him about his mom, "Your mama does this. Your mama does that." He goes to this kid. The next time the kid says that, and he says, "I've been thinking about that, and I've tried to get her to stop doing that stuff, but she just won't listen to me," and he walked away. The boy actually laughed. It was the end of the story there. Anyway, I just had to share that with...

Dave:

Those are the positive endings. There's also the bully who keeps hitting you whenever there's not a teacher around kind of situation.

Charles:

That's when we need to believe our kids, and if we have to make a change to a different school or different situation, it's worth it because it's that destructive.

Dave:

I was in that situation with one of the kids a while ago. Finally, I said, "All right, here's the deal. If you can't get away, and there's no teacher, then what you do is you hit them really hard, and then they'll stop hitting you." This is actually how school has worked throughout all of human history, and that's just how it is. Actually, this was my daughter. She says, "But it would probably hurt my hand." I said, "Yeah, but it'll hurt their face more, and you only have to do it once, right? It's not like this kid hasn't hit you dozens of times."

Dave:

Finally, I said, "Look, if you have to do it..." She goes, "Well, I'll get in trouble." I said, "Yeah, but you'll get a day off school, and I'll buy you ice cream. It's okay. You're allowed to protect yourself if you need to protect yourself, and your teacher isn't doing their job." I don't know if that was the right parenting answer. The teacher sure didn't like it when I told the teacher about it.

Charles:

It falls under the category of a fairly solid advice that is politically incorrect, but one of the things that we see is that bullies, they play by a different set of rules. Real, real bullies, aggressive people, sociopathic people play by a different set of rules. I had one in my life when I was 13 years of age, and I was a pretty passive kid. I had a three-day in school suspension as a result of solving that problem. I'll put it that way. It was one of the best decisions I've ever made in my life, so I'll just leave it at that.

Dave:

It's sad because sometimes, we're 10, 11, 12 year olds. There's a police on campus, and they're over enforcing, and sometimes a scuffle happens. I think that's missing from school. I wish I hadn't been bullied. I'm also glad that when I was bullied, and there was no teacher around, that I protected myself, because otherwise, I think I would have grown up to be a victim. That's what I wanted most for my kids. I don't care if you miss some school or not, but you'll learn that it's okay to protect yourself, and that's what I told the teacher.

Dave:

When my daughter's off in college, there's an aggressive person who won't stop, "It's up to you to stop him if you can't get help." I feel like that's missing from a lot of our schooling, but I'm glad most people don't get bullied, or at least many don't.

Charles:

The issue is we already have enough victims.

Dave:

How is that?

Charles:

It's like, we just don't need any more. I love the idea of raising kids who understand that, of course, we want to handle things with great honor and respect towards other people, great love, but there are times where we have to get pretty strong to make a point.

Dave:

Sometimes you do. Let's talk about that in the context of the pandemic, say parenting in the pandemic. I've seen people, lots of followers, there are kids who are getting bullied for getting the vaccine, and there are kids who are getting bullied for not getting the vaccine or for wearing a mask or not wearing a mask. There's all this weird tribal polarized behavior around people trying to force other people to do whatever makes them feel safe, regardless of science. It's not a logic. It's an emotional discussion. How do kids handle that, and how do parents help kids handle the weird social pressures around illogical behaviors?

Charles:

Well, I think that as parents, we welcome discussion about it, of course, in our house, so we're discussing things, and we're discussing the concept of freedom. Freedom is precious. The problem is that freedom... Now, here I go. Warning. Warning. Freedom is expensive. Freedom comes at a risk, and freedom terrifies so many people that when they see other people enjoying freedoms, even when those freedoms don't hurt anybody, it's threatening to them. Freedom is a threatening thing for a whole lot of people, and it really... In our home and in the Love and Logic philosophy, I'm all about Patrick Henry, "Give me liberty or give me death."

Charles:

In our family, we are going to live free. We are not going to be abusive, or hassle people who are exercising their freedoms that are not impinging on ours. We are going to respect those. We may not agree, but this is just what the value is in the Fay household. What can you say? I'm a real big fan of, "Okay, let's talk about what you can say to somebody if they hassle you about, "Well, how come you're vaccinated, or how come you're not vaccinated, or how come you have a blue mask instead of purple, whatever? How come you only have three instead of four on at the time?"

Charles:

It's all this stuff. How am I going to respond in a way where I do my best to maintain the dignity of both people involved?

Dave:

Wow, maintaining dignity.

Charles:

How come you're not wearing a mask? Because it's my personal decision, and it's my freedom, and because we're not being required to now.

Dave:

Very well put. I've seen a lot of frustration from my kids, and they'll say, "Daddy, last week, it was safe for me to have recess without a mask on, and this week, it's not, but the government rules say that I don't have to wear a mask, but the school says that I do. They didn't make me wear a mask when I was

standing with Suzy, but I had to wear the mask when I was sitting in my first class, and not my second mask." They look at me with pain, and they say, "It doesn't make any sense. It isn't doing anything because we're not doing anything consistently."

Dave:

What's a good parenting answer to that, because I've been struggling with that?

Charles:

Well, I think you handled it very well. It doesn't make sense. One of the things that will make you crazy is... Here's how to make yourself crazy, or make somebody else crazy, just in case you want to know how to do that. You try to make sense out of something that doesn't, and you obsess over it. You're like, "I gotta figure out how this makes sense." The truth of it is it don't make no sense. It don't make no sense. The way I explained it to my son is that there's a lot of people they're truly trying to help. In their hearts, they're trying to do the right thing.

Charles:

They have all different perspectives on this. Honestly, most people are just trying to live their lives. They're trying to love their kids. They're trying to love their family. They're trying to make a living. They just want to get through the day with some joy in their hearts. That's all it's about. Some of those people wear masks. Some of them don't. Some of them have vaccines. Some of them... They're just good people, and they're trying to make the best decision that they can given the fact that none of us know anything, right? Let's not pretend that this makes any sense.

Dave:

Critique what I did as a parent here. Tell me what I could have done better or whether this worked. I said, "Kids, sometimes, you wear a mask so the muggles feel safe, and you know very well that it doesn't do anything at all, but you're just doing it because it's less work, and it makes other people feel safe. There's other times where you are allowed to choose not to do it, but you get the consequences of choosing not to do it, which can be social shaming, or someone not letting you into the store, or someone yelling at you, or whatever the deal is, and you get to pick, and I'll support you either way."

Dave:

Is that a parenting win, or the muggles thing was judging and shaming and all that?

Charles:

Well, I don't want to be judgy and shaming with you, because I figure when I get my act together completely, then I'll really, I mean, totally flawless, then I'll be in a good place to judge other people. But with that said, I would... My delivery would be slightly different, but not that much.

Dave:

How would you do it?

Charles:

My response... Let me see if I can put myself right in the mood there. I'd say, "Some people truly are scared, and some people are just... They don't have any choice because they work someplace, and it's

required or whatever." Sometimes, we just show people love by doing things that make their lives easier." It's a little sacrifice we make, but we don't have to do it a lot. Fortunately, it's becoming less and less. I have to say I do that as well. It's been my stance on it. If somebody is uncomfortable, I'll do such and such just to help them feel more comfortable, because I don't want to be mean.

Charles:

But when I am in a situation where I get to make my own choice, then I get to make my own choice, and so that's pretty similar, I think, to what you said, Dave. Everybody's going to have a different take on it.

Dave:

I like what you said there. Sometimes you choose to wear it out of love, because the other person's afraid, or they're required to, and you're just doing it to be nice, even though it's dumb. That dichotomy is the hard part for teenagers, right?

Charles:

The great thing about being a teenager is that suddenly, your brain develops to a certain extent, and you realize that things don't make sense. It's like when you're little, everything makes sense. Everything is right with the world, and then all of a sudden, your brain shifts, and you're like, "My parents have stupid rules." It's like, "My mom, bless her heart." I mean, we couldn't have sodas in the car, because they were glass bottles. We couldn't have lollipops in the car because they jam down our throat, but we could ride in the back of the pickup truck down the highway with a chainsaw loose in there, sliding back and forth.

Charles:

When you're a teenager, all of a sudden, you're like, "What? This is nuts." With teenagers, so much of it is listening and not automatically judging, and then asking if they'd like your thoughts, so, "I think such and such," and inside, you're going, "I can't believe this kid said that. Well, tell me more about that. Why do you think it would be okay for... What do you think it's okay for people to do any drugs they want to do?" Let's say the kid says something like that, because they will, right, just to shock us. "Well, what do you think the pros are of that, the good part of it?" They'll share stuff that'll just, "Yeah," but you're listening, try to keep a straight face, and then just going, "Oh. Great. Do you see any cons with it, bad things about it?"

Charles:

It's like, "No, it's all good." That's when you say, "Hey, would you be interested in my thoughts as long as I don't judge you or tell you what to do?" "I guess." Then it's like, I suppose that at some point, I may believe some of those things, and then I got to see a lot of people that I love dearly start to experiment with drugs, and saw some lose their lives. Others lose their wives and others lose their kids, and everything in between, and changed my thoughts on it. The great thing about it is you have a powerful mind inside of that skull of yours. That's the great thing, and then you close it up.

Charles:

The interesting piece about this is that they come back around as long as you're not fighting with them about it. Nine times out of 10, if you're not fighting the power struggle, they come back around, and then there are 25 or whatever, and they're saying things like, "Well, I really think it's inappropriate that people... they legalized all these." Like, "Wow. What happened? It's a miracle." No, it was great bonding, and you didn't ruin the relationship by fighting with the teenager when they were pushing buttons.

Dave:

Wow. It's a complex path. I love the way you're sharing this actionable advice. I'm always replaying this conversation, "I wonder what else you could have done," but honestly, the set of options to pull from when you're doing it is relatively limited, because you don't really know where to go to get info as a parent. We talk to other parents and all this, so I appreciate what you've been sharing on the show. You have all of this put together. [Loveandlogic.com](http://Loveandlogic.com) is the URL for this. It's pretty neat.

Dave:

The frameworks you have, I went through them after Dr. Amen recommended it, and just this whole idea that there's only five things you have to do. I want to recap that, the five non-negotiable core principles. Can you walk people through those as we wrap up the show?

Charles:

Sure. There's five core principles. They're pretty broad, but they really do nail it down. The first one is that I want to handle the kid with mutual dignity, so my dignity is intact, and the kid's dignity is intact. The biggest issue there is limits, can't be any dignity in the home if there aren't limits. Another piece of it is shared thinking. You've heard a lot of that today, where we're asking the kid, "What do you think you're going to do to solve this problem?" See, I should never be consistently thinking harder about my kid's problems than they are. Another piece of it is shared control.

Charles:

That's the third one, shared control. I want to give away the control that I don't have or need. Do you want to be home by 10 or 10:30? You decide. Hey, do you want to have carrots or celery, these little choices? Bombard them with that stuff, lots of control. People love control. The more you give away, the more you have. The more you hoard, the less you have. Then we have empathy, sincere empathy. That's what sends the message that I'm on your side, kid, and when I am on your side, kid, the hard part for the kid is that they have to think about their own poor decision rather than blaming us for what they did.

Charles:

These four things all boil down into relationship, so number five is relationship. It is how are we going to connect with this kid where the kid actually puts our values inside their heart? I have to say my mom struggled with bipolar depression. She struggled with all sorts of trauma and pain and anxiety, and she really struggled with parenting, but one thing she consistently did is she didn't give up. She just didn't give up, and she consistently said this message to us kids, "You're the apple of my eye." That's simple. You're the apple of my eye.

Charles:

When you make decisions, you'll need to get yourself out of your messes, that kind of thing, but she struggled a lot. She had such a profound impact on me, and she passed away a few years back. Like I said, she's always with me, just hanging out there. Now, she's the strong person who doesn't have that terrible illness or those struggles, and now, her voice is in my head saying things like, "You can do this, and doing the right thing for people is the right thing to do. When you mess up, that's okay. You just get back on that horse, and you'll be okay."

Charles:

Here, we have a person who really struggle with life. That's such a big impact. I think that gives all of us a lot of hope.

Dave:

I like that a lot. When people struggle and overcome and still do their best and end up being good parents, despite whatever got in the way, that's one of the hardest things you can do as a human being because it's one of the jobs that's unpredictable, never stops. You don't get to take a break when you want to, so my full respect to people who parent and do their best, and my full respect to people who say, "I decided I didn't want to do that, because it's a lot of work, and I had other priorities." I get it, guys. It's all good, anyway.

Charles:

That's right. That's right.

Dave:

Well, thank you, Charles Fay, and thanks for Love and Logic.

Charles:

Thank you.

Dave:

Also, thanks, Daniel and Tana Amen for bringing you to my attention, because I hadn't heard about your work, but it's a logical, useful framework, and it's got a lot of really cool parenting ninja moves in it. I'm learning from it, and I thought a lot of our guests would enjoy that. I don't know what percentage of people have kids who listen, but it's a meaningful percentage I would imagine. Guys, I hope you enjoyed it. If you listened and you didn't have kids, just think what your parents did to you and what it installed in you, and the next time you talk to a little kid, even if it's not yours, maybe there's something in here for you. Again, that's [loveandlogic.com](http://loveandlogic.com).

Charles:

Thank you so much, such a joy. I'm so thankful that I didn't have to follow my outline. That was fun.

Dave:

I wouldn't be doing my job right if you had to follow an outline. All right, guys, I will see you on the next show. Thank you Upgrade Collective for tuning in live. I didn't mention it, but normally, I do live questions, but they're like, "Dave, every question that we wanted to ask you are already asked." They're all waving at me right now, because if you are thinking about this, for one monthly fee, me and my team answer all of your questions. You get two calls with me every month, and you get two calls with my coaching team and a vibrant community supporting you, learning about all the biohacking stuff.

Dave:

I teach you all my books and courses for free. It's probably the best deal that you'll ever get. Go to [ourupgradecollective.com](http://ourupgradecollective.com), and sign up and join a lot of people having a lot of fun. This is also uncensored. This is stuff I can say that's not on public websites. You want to get inside my head? [Ourupgradecollective.com](http://Ourupgradecollective.com). Again, our guest today, [loveandlogic.com](http://loveandlogic.com). I'll see you all on the next episode.

