



God Hears Her Podcast

Episode 89 – Parenting in a Toxic Culture

Elisa Morgan & Eryn Eddy with Dr. Meg Meeker

Meg: Kids want to know that we don't just love them. We want their company. If you go to the grocery store, ask your child to come; and say I haven't really talked to you in a while. Will you just come to the store with me? I just want to be with you. Boom, that's how you create a strong child. It's attending to his inner world which includes his spiritual world. And teach your kids who the person of Christ is, not by telling them, but by sharing with them what He has done for you that day.

Voice: You're listening to *God Hears Her*, a podcast for women where we explore the stunning truth that God hears you, He sees you, and He loves you because you are His. Find out how these realities free you today on *God Hears Her*.

Eryn: Welcome to *God Hears Her*. I'm Eryn Eddy.

Elisa: And I'm Elisa Morgan. Parenting is hard. If you're a parent, you know all too well how your kids impact and affect you and not always in the best ways. Or if you want to be a parent, you're most likely trying to prepare yourself for being a mom or a dad, as if any of us can ever really be prepared for this. I think it's safe to say that just about all of us expect to have close relationships with our kids even if things don't always work out that way.

Eryn: Today we are talking with Dr. Meg Meeker about parenting and how you can develop close relationships with your kids. Dr. Meg is a pediatric doctor and the founder of Parenting Great Kids, an online community filled with resources for parents and kids. She's also the author of multiple books, and she's sold over 700,000 copies. She currently lives and works in Traverse City, Michigan, with her husband, Walter.

Elisa: We are so excited for the opportunity to speak with Dr. Meg about her passion and her incredible work on this episode of *God Hears Her*.

Eryn: When I was researching this next guest and learning more about her work, I was just like what? Why have I just now been introduced to her. I'm so excited to have Dr. Meg Meeker on our show, Elisa.

Elisa: Yes, welcome, Dr. Meg.



Meg: Thanks so much for having me, Elisa and Eryn.

Eryn: So, okay is it Dr. Meg, or is it Dr. Meeker? Or would you like to be called Dr. Meg Meeker?

Elisa: Or M&M? I don't know, whatever.

Eryn: Or M&M. Which one is it?

Meg: I've been called everything, DM2, Dr. Meg.

Eryn: Oh that's cute.

Meg: Yeah, it's fine. Whatever you like to call me. You can call me Meg. It's important I think for listeners to know I am a pediatrician. There are a lot of parent coaches out there, tons of parent coaches and mom bloggers. But what I tr...try to bring through podcasts and speaking is information about kids and parents on both a spiritual and an emotional-psychological and a physical side, because it all works together. So from that forward, as long as people know I'm a pediatrician; you can call me whatever...Meg is fine. Meg's fine, yeah.

Eryn: Where are you coming from?

Meg: I'm in Traverse City, Michigan.

Eryn: Okay.

Meg: And we have lived here since 1990. My husband and I came, and we started a medical practice together in 1992. And we...we now have eight physicians. And we have been practicing ever since then together. And we have four grown kids and six grandkids.

Elisa: Wow.

Eryn: Oh.

Elisa: So is your husband a physician as well?

Meg: He is. He's an internist and a pediatrician.



Elisa: Awesome, wow.

Meg: And I'm a pediatrician. And most pediatricians are supposed to give up their patients at around 15. But sometimes mine carry into the twenties, early. And then I say, you have to go. Hey, hey, you have to go.

Elisa: Today's adolescents last till we're like 50, so I think you're just right.

Meg: They do. And what I've seen is these kids need help navigating college...

Eryn: Yeah.

Meg: ...as well. And so that's why I've just hung in there with them.

Elisa: Yeah, I'll be making an appointment after this conversation.

Eryn: I know. I wish you lived in my city. How do we find another one of you?

Meg: I don't know. I'm old, and that's a little hard to come by.

Elisa: How did you end up as a pediatrician? What's...what's your story?

Meg: Well it's interesting. I never intended to be doing what I'm doing now. And so I want to encourage all women out there. If you think you're on the straight and narrow path, take a breath. You're not. God is a very...He takes you on a very circuitous path. So just be ready. My husband and I went to medical school together. And when it came time for us to do residency, which is extremely intense, 90 hours a week. We had a daughter. And he said, we can't both do this together. It's not fair to our daughter. And I said, you're right. And he said, if you quit and I finish residency first, you won't go back. And he's right. And he said, I will quit and support you and the kids. And then you do your residency, and then we'll tag team.

Elisa: Wow.

Meg: And that's what we did. My husband was actually an at-home dad for three years. And I will tell you, it was a very rich time in our relationship. And then he did his training. And then we moved here, and we worked together which was great. Because we owned our practice. We still own it. And I could schedule patients around my kids' schedules. So that was wonderful.



Elisa: Oh that's great. That is huge. And wow, what a servant this guy is to do that.

Meg: Oh.

Elisa: That's kind of an odd and rare investment.

Eryn: Yeah.

Meg: You know he's extraordinary. And he really was the impetus between me writing my book *Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters* because he adores Jesus. I don't know how else to say that.

Elisa: Oh.

Meg: He just adores Him. And he's taken the kids on mission trips, and he's extremely supportive of me doing the work that I'm doing. Because to me, encouraging parents is my mission. As a matter of fact, I never started into pediatrics thinking I was going to write and do what I'm doing now, never, ever, ever. I literally in the 90s was speaking out against the sexualization of our kids. And I thought, why doesn't anybody say anything? Well literally I was giving a lecture, and a publisher was sitting in the audience and said, here we go. And I wrote a book. And the first day the book came out, do you remember Bill O'Reilly?

Eryn: Yeah.

Elisa: Sure, yeah.

Meg: Yeah, okay. I was sitting across from him on his show the first day my book came out, and I had no training at all. But you know God throws you in these most peculiar situations. And I've had more and more and more peculiar situations. I've worked with NFL. I work with different organizations. And I think, what am I doing here? But you know, God every single time equips you to do what He wants you to do in situations that feel so odd. And I need everybody who's listening to know that God may throw you a curve ball, but He will never leave you alone in that situation. He will always be with you 100 percent. So that's been a very encouraging for my life.

Eryn: Wow, wow. Did you always know that you wanted to be a pediatrician when you were younger? Was that a desire of yours, or was that something that the Lord kind of placed on your heart in your twenties? Or how did that come to be?



Meg: When I was 16, my father was a physician. When I was 16, I decided I was going to go to medical school. That was it. My dad never encouraged me. As...as a matter of fact, he kind of discouraged me. He saw medicine changing. But I knew I wanted to g...go to medical school. And I went. I wanted to be a surgeon. And I really wanted to be a s...I'm a good knitter.

Eryn: I love that.

Elisa: Well.

Eryn: I love that.

Meg: So that's...that's what I do instead of surgery. Okay, but I realized that if I was going to go into surgery, it meant that I had to work full-time. Because in order to be a really good surgeon, you have to be in the OR practicing...honing your skills. But we had four kids. And I said, this just isn't going to work. And so kind of by default, I ended up in pediatrics. And I love pediatrics, but it wasn't my first choice. You know surgery was. But literally we went to med school in Ohio. My husband wanted to stay in Ohio. I wanted to go to Boston. And we were both brats, I'll tell you the truth. We were just brats.

Elisa: There's a brat in all of us.

Meg: We wanted to do...

Eryn: There is.

Meg: Yeah, we...we wanted to do what we wanted to do. So anyway, we ended up in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. And I literally, when I was sending in my applications for residency, I literally had my first all in the envelope list of choices I wanted to go to. The top choice was Boston. I had it sealed. I went to put it into the mailbox. And right before I did, I pulled it out. I unsealed it, and I put Milwaukee Children's Hospital as my first choice. Now that was God.

Elisa: Wow.

Meg: Because I...I did...I didn't want to go there.

Elisa: Wow.



Meg: I wanted to go to Boston. And that's where we went. And that's really where my husband really learned who Christ was. Really learned what Scripture was trying to tell us. Really dove in. And then after a while, I saw the change in him. I really thought he was a little kooky going to all these Bible studies.

Elisa: Yeah.

Meg: Cause I w...I grew up in New England. You know honestly, if somebody would have said...asked me if when I was 25 I was a Christian, I'd look and go, well I'm not Jewish. So I must be. That's what I knew. So anyway, God sort of grabbed us by the shoulders and threw us there and said, I'm going to do something with you. And that was a turning point, so...

Eryn: Wow.

Meg: And here's the thing. Even if we're walking along, and we're doing what we're doing and we don't know Christ well, God's going to take charge at times. And that is so comforting for me to know. Because I think as Christian women, we so desperately want to do God's will. And it's not that hard. Just let Him be, and let Him work. And be willing to go into the peculiar places.

Eryn: Yes. Yes, cause so often, we want to know what the future holds that we will go into our own control and our own strength to feel that comfort. And we never feel at peace when we do that. I never feel at peace...

Meg: No.

Eryn: ...when I'm like I'll just take control and...and do it on my own strength. But the whole time, I'm wishing God would. And He's just like I'm here. Why don't you give it to Me?

Elisa: [inaudible] chance, yeah.

Meg: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Eryn: What are some milestones that you can just...or some memories that you can recall on from that moment where you were in your faith to where you are now that developed your faith to where you are now?

Meg: Well I'll never forget sitting in church for the first time. It was a Jill and Stuart Briscoe. I don't know if anybody knows them.



Elisa: Sure do.

Meg: It was their church.

Elisa: Love them.

Meg: And I...and I...and I remember sitting there in the congregation listening to Stuart. And my mouth dropped open. I said, I've never heard this before. I literally had never heard exegesis. I've never...I never knew. And I'll never forget that moment I thought wow. There's a whole new world that I'm not privy to. And when I saw my husband throw his life into Christ's lap, and I saw him change so dram...this is a man who is very strong-willed. He looks like Grizzly Adams if you remember who that is.

Elisa: Yeah.

Meg: And he grew up with three sisters and an at-home mom. This was not a guy who was trained to be home with kids. But...but he did it.

Eryn: Wow.

Meg: And I was just stunned. So I'm one of those women who many women experience they come to the Lord. And then they sort of drag their husbands into it. It was the exact opposite for us.

Eryn: Wow.

Meg: And so he just really...didn't really say anything. And so that's when I sort of just started to come around. And then during my work in children's hospital, once I let Christ take hold of me, my approach towards my patients became more real and more painful. Because I believe I was beginning to feel what He felt towards these kids.

Elisa: Wow.

Meg: And it's like it stuck. And...and that...that sticking is with me today. It never left. As a matter of fact, it's just gotten deeper and deeper. And I can honestly say, and I've been doing this for 32 years, I've never met a patient I didn't like. And I've worked with kids out of juvi, jail, foster care, hooked on drugs, anorexia nervosas on the edge of death, and I've never seen a child that I couldn't see and see Christ in there. And that compels you to do your work better. It compels you to do whatever you can to help their

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parents. Because I...I learned early on, if I wanted to do well by the kids in my practice, I had to help their parents. Cause their parents had the power not me. And so that's really why I've felt called to do what I'm doing. Many people would call me and say, Will you talk to our high school kids. Would you talk to our college kids. Or will you talk...I said I will, but only if parents come and let me talk to them first.

Elisa: Yeah.

Meg: And believe it or not, it was much easier to get the kids than the parents; because the parents were afraid. They were afraid of what I was going to say. They were afraid I was going to come down on which was the exact opposite, of course.

Elisa: What do you think parents especially struggle with today? Can you explain that?

Meg: Well there's been a rise of two problems that are converging. And it is this. On one hand, the world that they are dealing with and their kids are in is very loud.

Eryn: Yeah.

Meg: They have too much stimulation. They have audio-visual stimulation, emotional stimulation. And they are sucked into this world that is teaching them to live in isolation. And parents know this, and it terrifies this. On the other side, parents have been given so much information and so much advice on the Internet; and it makes their heads spin. And so they're afraid. They see their kids in a culture that feels overwhelming. And they see what's happening to their kids. They have no idea where to go.

Eryn: They feel helpless, yeah.

Meg: They feel totally helpless. So I am so pro-parent. And to say look, take a big deep breath. Let's get the big stuff right, and stop reading so much. Do the best you can to begin to extract your kids from this really toxic culture. It's toxic. My last book was *Raising a Strong Daughter in a Toxic Culture*. And you can do this. I didn't raise kids this way. I didn't feel overwhelmed with advice. When my kids were little, I wasn't going on the Internet reading a hundred blogs a day.

Elisa: Yeah.

Meg: I wasn't looking at Instagram with people telling me vaccinate, don't vaccinate. You're a horrible person if you this. If you don't get this kind of stroller, you're just not a good mom.



Eryn: Yeah.

Meg: You better send your...it is overwhelming for mothers. And they are afraid. And they don't need to live this way.

Elisa: You said something about just get the big stuff right. What's the big stuff?

Meg: Well that's where Jesus shines. You know His two biggest commandments to us are what? Love the Lord your God with all your heart and treat your neighbor as yourself. And everybody goes yeah, yeah, yeah. I say whoa. Don't go yeah, yeah, yeah. Those are the hardest things to get right, correct? So first as a mom, make sure you're doing what you can to love your Lord, to love your God. Love Him. Love Him. Love Him. And immerse yourself in His Word and in prayer, the best you can. Okay, sometimes it's five minutes a day praying on the way to pick up the kids at school. It's okay. Sometimes when you're older like I am and you have time, you can sit an hour. It doesn't matter. And then second is do your best to love your kids well. What does that mean? Does that mean creating a great portfolio for them to succeed in life? No. No. It doesn't mean making sure that they have the best of everything, and they eat enough kale every day. You know make sure you're looking at your kids and you're seeing kids every day. You can't see them if you're on your phone and they're on your phone, and they're upstairs, and you're downstairs. Or they're at soccer, you know. See your kids and hear your kids every day. That's what kids need in order to have self-confidence, self-assurance, and to feel loved by you. Signing them up for a lot of stuff creates a good portfolio for them and helps them quote unquote "find what they like and their passion" all that kind of stuff. But you don't need to do that. Be with your kids more. You know particularly if you have a child who's really acting out, I mean really acting out. Here's the good news/bad news. You can help turn that child around. But in order to do that, it means she or he needs to spend more time with you. That's contrary to what we're teaching. It's like no, send them off to a school out west for six weeks, correct the kid and bring them home. No, no, no, no, no. But we're teaching our kids to live in isolation. That's exactly what they don't need. So getting the big stuff right means, you know, loving the Lord, doing the best you can to love your kids, and realizing it has nothing to do with sending them out or even what school they go to or what sports...whatever. It means spending that time looking at them in the eye, asking them a question, and listening to them and then listening and keep your mouth shut. That's hard. Listen more, and say less.

Eryn: Yeah.

Meg: What did Jesus do? He walked to people. He looked at them. And they'd ask a question, and He'd give them the most peculiar answer. But He listened to them, and He saw them. Isn't that what we want



as women? We want our husband to see us and to want to hear us. That's the big step. We want attention. We want affection. We want to know that we are liked, that someone wants our company. Kids want to know that we don't just love them, we want their company. If you go to the grocery store, ask your child to come and say, I haven't really talked to you in a while. Will you just come to the store with me? I just want to be with you. Boom, that's how you create a strong child. It's attending to his inner world which includes his spiritual world. And teach your kids who the person of Christ is, not by telling them, but by sharing with them what He has done for you that day.

Eryn: When we come back, Dr. Meg Meeker will share some ways parents can develop healthy relationships with their kids and a personal story about her patience overcoming their struggles. That's coming up next on *God Hears Her*.

[music]

Eryn: *God Loves Her* is the newest book in our *God Hears Her* series. You know, we all just want to be reminded that we are loved. And in this devotional, women writers share personal stories about God's love that is unconditional. Not only can you receive love from Him, but you'll want to share it with others. *God Loves Her* is perfect to take on the go or to curl up with in your favorite spot at home. Get one for yourself, and share with a friend who can use a special reminder of God's love. Go to godlovesher.org to order. That's godlovesher.org. Now back to the show. You know I have a question it's...it's...it's a pretty specific question. And I would imagine that a lot of our listeners right now there's a few that can identify with this. How do you apply some of these principles when you are a single parent and maybe you're coparenting with somebody that is not healthy. And you only get your kids a certain amount of time. And when you get them, you're like I need to instill all the principles as possible. You feel that pressure. How do you implement some of this while still just being a dad or a mom?

Elisa: Yeah.

Meg: Well first of all, the principle's the same. But they're much harder to live out as a single parent, particularly when you're being sabotaged...

Eryn: Yes.

Meg: ...by the other parent. It happens all the time. I tell parents, and I want every mom to hear this. Your job is not to raise a great 15-year-old. Your job is to raise a great 25-year-old. Because we know that their brain development isn't complete until the early twenties. That means, if you've got a husband who's an ex who's sabotaging you, and your 16-year-old is screaming at you. And you're trying to get that child to godhearsher.org



love the Lord and to behave and to be respectful and to want to go to bed when you say so. But they're not doing it when they're 16. Here's the good news/bad news. You have nine years.

Elisa: Oh boy.

Meg: Truly.

Elisa: Yes, right.

Meg: Truly and I think that what single parents need to remember is this. Take the high road always. Never criticize that ex. Here's why. Because you know what he did wrong. Your kid knows what he did wrong. But your child deserves the healthiest relationship he or she can have with your ex, even if you don't like that ex. You divorced that person. He or she didn't. And they need...they don't want. They need some sort of relationship with that person. And once you begin to speak against that person, you turn the kid against them. And that's going to come back to bite you. So take the high road. Keep your mouth shut when it comes to the ex, who's doing awful things at the house, you know. And I've seen it all. You know drugs at his house, and you're taking your kid to you know youth group Wednesday night and church on Sunday morning. And you pray your heart out for your kid. And you don't need to say a whole lot. Because even a 10-year-old knows the difference between your house and dad's house.

Eryn: Yeah.

Meg: Or your house and mom's house. They know. They know what's true. They know what's good. God puts that in their heart. They don't want to live it because they're confused. So you keep doing what's good and right and true. And tell your kids periodically why you know Christ will never leave them and why Christ is even at dad's house, right? Or that...or that person's house. And then you are patient. And don't freak out. If your 15-year-old is going to start, you know, feel like he's gon...she's gonna go over the edge, and she's running around with some creepy guy. Bring that guy into your home or whatever. And immerse yourself in her position, and try to understand. Don't criticize, but let her know that you are with her in this confusion. You will never change her mind by preaching to her. You will change her mind by staying with her in the tough stuff and letting her know this is hard. This is really hard. And my job is to link arms with you in a world that's really painful and help you through it. I'm not your enemy. I'm your ally. because everybody at school and in every place she hears, parents are the enemy.

Eryn: Yeah.



Meg: Right? And peers are the people who really understand them. That's not true. You let your child know that you love him or her, you're their ally. And then, as I say, you don't need to tell your kid that what the ex is doing is...is terrible and wrong. That kid knows it and feels it. What they need is support and encouragement, cause they're going to have to keep going there.

Elisa: That is super helpful.

Meg: And you can't change it. Now if there's frank abuse going on, get a good lawyer. That's all you can do.

Eryn: I would love to hear you speak into whether you are a step-parent or a potential step-parent, what is your role when you may see some of the heartache that divorce creates and you know what you were sharing about you see sabotage and you see differences of parenting and co-parenting. What encouragement and what just real truth would you speak to that person that's in that space?

Meg: Well any step-parent moving into a new family needs to know they can have a life-changing impact on his step-children or her step-children. Now your path is very different from a biologic parent's path. You will not have a life-changing impact in a year or two or three. It's going to happen over a long time. And many step-parents get very impatient, and they feel they should be able to come in. And if one of the kids is acting up, they should discipline them and the kid will come. No, no, no. You walk into a family where the kids aren't going to like you. Assume they're not going to like you for—for good reason. They've been burned. Okay. They've been burned either by their mother or their father. So the minute you walk in there, they're not going to be warm and fuzzy to you. They're going to be very suspicious. So what you need to do first and foremost is allow discipline to happen with the bio parent. I know that's hard to do, but that person has to take charge. Your job is to earn the child's trust. Because if you're a man and bio dad took off, that kid is just waiting for you to do the same thing. And they will do whatever they can to drive you away. And if you respond with a hard hammer, the kid's going to leave. So you need to really think this through and never get into a power struggle with the kid and give the child time and space. And it goes back to that, sit in the room with the child. Ask them a question, and listen. That's it. Listen for the first couple years. That takes a lot of maturity. That's how you win that child's heart. And I will tell you, I've been to more than one wedding, more than a handful of weddings of my patients who've been walked down the aisle by a step-dad, and bio dad's in the pews. It's real. And they can...step-mom or step-dad can change a child's life. But you've gotta walk very, very carefully.

Elisa: Can you speak to such the prevalence of anxiety and depression and just hopelessness that you see in kids today and how parents can really engage and be with and lock arms and not isolate but rather join your child in that battle?



Meg: Sure, here's what kids are contending with that's hard for us to understand. People are born for relationship. That's why God created...that's the heart of who we are, okay, is to be close to the Lord, close to one another, and close to those around us, our family. And we are born to have that. I had that when I was growing up because I didn't have so many distractions. I spent a lot of time with my mom and dad for good or ill. I learned a lot through the bad times and the good times. Kids now are being trained to crack that. They are trained to live autonomously. They are told they are not to be dependent. They are given many things that pull their attention away from parents. And parents are lured into things that take their kids away from them. I'm talking about screens of course. And the more time you spend on screens, the more time you are isolated on a deep level. Parents say, oh they're connected. No, they're not. They're isolated. And when what you're born for is cracked and broken, the result is pain. And kids are in pain because of screens and social media and phones. Now this is hard for parents to hear, because it frightens them. My kid has a phone. She's 10, but what do I do? Everybody has it. I...whoa. It doesn't mean you have to throw the phone away yet, okay. But there are practical things that we can do to restore this relationship that our kids so desperately need. And when we begin to do that, that's when kids begin to crawl out of anxiety and depression.

Elisa: Okay.

Meg: Because that's our job. So it's...it's isolation is a huge part of it. And we have studies that show that the more time girls are on social media, there's a direct correlation, more time, more likely to be depressed. More and more and more—worse and worse depression. And I see this lived out. Now the other thing is that kids are trained. They are told by their schools and their friends and teachers and everybody, you know, your parents have it all wrong, you know. Your parents have it all wrong. I know what's best, and I'm going to take you in a very different direction. So kids don't trust their parents, which is a further separation. Cause relationships with parents and siblings are where kids have their foundation built. And that's where they stand. But their kids are being told, don't...you don't need to stand anywhere. Because the...the ground underneath you isn't solid, so let's just figure out a way that's going to work for you. And they begin there. So there are many things at work in the culture for kids that parents are not responsible for that happen to their kids. And so parents, if your child is anxious and depressed, do not give up hope. Do not be afraid. Depression and anxiety are treatable.

Eryn: Yeah.

Meg: I'd say the majority of kids I've seen in my practice who have anxiety and depression get past it. But it takes years, and it takes gritty work. But it takes parents who are willing to roll up their sleeves and say, I'm terrified and I know you're terrified. But we're going to do this. Because it's a monster, and it comes
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straight from the pit of hell. It really does. Because depression talks to kids, and it tells them they really need to die. And that why live? And why...but...

Eryn: And it won't get better.

Meg: ...but here we sit with Christ who is what? He is hope. He is hope. So when the darkness of your kid's depression, even if your kid is seven or 10, you've got the answer. Okay, now you can't make your kid swallow it. But boy oh boy, you can bring it to them and present it. And even if you give your kids hope, say look at honey. You feel horrible today. And maybe you're taking a lot of drugs, and they're making you feel horrible. But you know you can get past it. You know it isn't working. So I know that God loves you like mad and I love you like mad. So let's just the three of us start to take a baby step out of it.

Elisa: Can you share a story of hope where you saw great change happen in a relationship yeah?

Meg: Oh, where do I start? Yeah, sure. I saw a young boy who from age about eight on and his mother had a mental illness. His dad had taken off, and he was in jail far away for child sexual abuse. And his sister was never r...around. And he was going along. And when he came in around 11, I saw a huge physical change in him. As his parents had changed, he star...he had lost a lot of weight. He dyed his hair. And I thought, uh oh, it's starting. And what I mean is the pain. The pain is sinking in. He has nowhere to go. His anxiety became so bad, that during high school, he got terrible agoraphobia, and he couldn't leave his house. He had nobody. He couldn't even connect with his friends. And I would schedule appointments with him, and he very often wouldn't show up. So I'd literally call him at home. I'd say "get in here." "I can't, I can't, I can't." okay, so we waited a year and two or three. Time, I mean really a time. He eventually came out of his agoraphobia and then he started doing really bad behaviors. He became very sexually promiscuous. He didn't know if he was gay or if he was straight or if he...he didn't know what he was. And now he's in his mid to late teens, and he'd bec...came thinner and thinner which is a sign of increased depression and self-hatred. And I said okay, you know, what's going on. Why are you so promiscuous? I just get right to it, okay.

Eryn: I love that. I like how straight to the point.

Meg: Why? What are you doing? He said, well he said I've started to do this because I know I really need to connect with people. I said, well who are you connecting with? And I...he said, oh people on the Internet. We just hook up. I said kay...I said okay, who are these people you're hooking up with? I don't know who they are. And he said, you need to give me that HIV drug, that AIDS drug. I said, I'm not going to do that; I said because I'm not going to sit here and watch you kill yourself. And he looked at me like, I can't believe this. I'm going to take you to court. You can't do this to me. I said, fire me. You know, what



do I have to lose. Anyway, and I said, here's the thing. Do you think you're looking for human intimacy on an emotional level? And he goes, yes. I said okay, this is what we're going to do. We're going to try something for a couple of months, no sex for a couple months; but you just talk to your best friend. All right, I can do that. Anyway, long story short, by the time he was 20, he was graduating from my practice. And the minute I walked in the room, he jumped off the table. He was taller than me at this time, and he gave me this big huge bear hug. And he said, I can't think you enough. I'm going off to college and life is good. And you...you have been the most consistent person in my life. I'm not patting myself on the shoulder. I'm saying this for one reason. I only saw him three or four times a year. That's a sad commentary. But what he got was somebody who was...had his back, who talked straight, and who showed him who he was and what he really wanted in very simple terms. You need deep connection here, and I'm not going sit here and watch you fake it, okay. And you can have this. And...and...and then he got it, and he got it. And now he's doing great. I have seen this scenario work out countless times. That happens far more frequently in dealing with tough kids than...than dying. And that's the hope we live with. I know that hope, and that's why I can stay in the room with these kids year after year. And that's what I want to encourage parents to do. Stay in the room with your kids year after year, and don't freak out. Never give up on your kids.

Elisa: That true story is so inspiring and incredible to hear. I'm super grateful for the skills God has poured out on Dr. Meg.

Eryn: Oh yes, Elisa, me too. She is truly gifted at caring for and loving her patients.

Elisa: Well before we close out today's episode of *God Hears Her*, we want to remind you that the show notes are available in the podcast description. You can also find a link to check out meekerparenting.com and a link to order Dr. Meg Meeker's books. There are also links to connect with Eryn and me on social. You can find all these links when you visit our website at godhearsher.org. That's godhearsher.org.

Eryn: Thank you for joining us. And don't forget. God hears you, He sees you, and He loves you because you are His.

Elisa: Today's episode was engineered by Anne Stevens and produced by Mary Jo Clark, Daniel Ryan Day, and Jade Gustafson. We also want to thank Alisha and Rochelle for all of their help and support. Thanks everybody.

Eryn: *God Hears Her* is a production of Our Daily Bread Ministries.