

00:02 Andrei: Bine v-am gasit! Sunt Andrei Dumitrascu si ascultati “Childlife: Provocari de parinte”, un podcast creionat de Secom. Astazi am ca invitat, asa cum v-am obisnuit, pe cineva foarte special si tocmai de departe, din Statele Unite ale Americii. Este un foarte binecunoscut psiholog si autor de carti, specializat in terapia prin joc. A dezvoltat conceptul de “playful parenting” care vorbeste despre importanta conexiunii dintre parinte si copil. Cartea cu acelasi titlu a fost tradusa in 14 limbi. Larry Cohen a fost de patru ori in Romania in ultimii noua ani, pentru a prezenta abordarea sa catre parinti si specialist. Larry, welcome to our podcast “Parenting challenges”! It’s one of the most listened parenting podcast in Romania and I’m so happy to have you here.

00:49 Larry: Multumesc.

00:52 Andrei: Wow! Amazing!

00:53 Larry: After that, I have to switch to English.

00:57 Andrei: Thanks a lot for being here with us. I have to tell that I’m a bit nervous, but I’m counting on your help to get over it because I’m quite sure that we’ll have a very nice discussion. Larry, let’s jump a little bit into the discussions because we have a lot of topics today and I really want to have time to go through all of them. I want to talk and I want to start with your book, “Playful Parenting”, which is a beautiful book. In this book you say that you developed this approach while playing with your daughter, Emma. Can you tell us more about this concept of playful parenting?

01:36 Larry: When I was training to be a psychologist I did very well with adults. I understood the concepts and I was nervous, I didn’t really know what I was doing as a beginning therapist, but I understood the concepts. I also, in my training, had to work with children and families and I had no idea what I was doing. I wasn’t a parent and it seemed to me that the message from my professors was: “It’s all the parents’ fault and you have to rescue the poor innocent children from their horrible parents”. I’m sure they would deny that and there were doubts that’s really what they were saying, but that’s what I felt that they were saying and with that attitude, I was not very helpful to any child or certainly to any parent. So, I stayed working with adults. And then I became a father and here’s this little baby and I realized: “Wait a minute! The parents aren’t horrible monsters! Parenting is hard!” Nobody said that. People joke about it, but the reality is parenting is

challenging, it stirs up in parents all of our old, a lot of old feelings that we safely put away, but now we can't put them away anymore. Things come out of our mouths, that we've never thought that we would say, we didn't like it when our parents said it, but it lives inside of us. Unfortunately, the things our parents said at their worst moments become the things that we say and do at our worst moments. And we all have those moments. So, I was a father and I was a psychologist and I thought: "What am I going to do here?" and I thought I need to learn, so I just watched. I watched my daughter, I watched myself, I looked around for friends that I admired, how they were as parents and I started putting together this idea about parenting that focuses on connection, really puts connection at the heart. And over the years I've really started to think about two main ways to connect with children. And one of them is to play – that's just where children live, the world of play. We get on the floor and we play with them. When they're older, we don't get on the floor, but we maybe sit next to them on the couch and watch their favorite TV show, even though we hate it. We just do that because we want to connect with them. And the other way to connect is emotional understanding: "I see how you feel. I know how you feel. All of your feelings are important to me. Even if you're angry, even if you're scared and I don't think there's any good reason to be scared, I still have empathy for you." When we combine joining children in play and giving them empathy and emotional understanding, we build a really powerful connection.

04:37 Andrei: Talking about this emotional intelligence and this emotional area, does playing built resilience? And if so, how? Can you help us with some examples?

04:50 Larry: Absolutely. Both of these. Play builds resilience and having somebody who cares about your feelings and sees you and your feelings, this also helps resilience. And it's the opposite of what we usually think. We usually think hard work and "suck it up" and "don't cry", that this is the essence of resilience. But that's not... I would call that toughness. Toughness can get us so far and then it stops, it starts getting in our way, instead of helping us. People who are only tough, they become aggressive to others. They can't take feedback from others. They can't get along well with others. So, in our world, we need to get along, we need to cooperate, we need to be creative. So, toughness doesn't do it. What we need is something bigger and we need human connections. We need, in order to be successful in life, we need to be able to talk to people and to listen to people. We need to know when we're rubbing somebody the wrong way. We need to know if we need to change direction. We need to work together. And children learn this by playing. They learn

how to get along. They learn how to create something together. When you're getting on the floor with a four year-old and you're playing pretend, which I do a lot with my granddaughter now. We play pretend and we're building a whole world together. This builds this ability for teamwork. In play, you can make a mistake and there's no stakes. It's OK, you made a mistake. And this is why so much learning happens in play. Now there's a funny thing that happened, which is parents got this message: children learn through play. So, they got this funny idea, which is when children are playing we should make sure we're teaching them something. That's not what it means at all. So, I see kids at the park and they're playing with a truck and the parent or the grandparent says: "How many wheels does the truck has? What color is the truck?" And that's not play, that's an examination. The child doesn't need an exam, they need to play. By playing with the truck, they'll learn about wheels and they'll learn about colors and they'll learn about Physics, not from any instruction, just from playing. And they'll learn how to take turns, they'll learn how to handle frustration. When a child on their own is trying to figure it out something complicated like a ladder, let's say, or how to build a tower of block that doesn't fall over, or when they're older, doing something more elaborate, building a tree house, or whatever is they're doing. When they're doing it in play, they are handling their frustration, they run into problems and their joy and their desire to achieve it give them the inner strength to overcome that frustration. That's where it really comes from. Doesn't come from lectures, doesn't come from "Oh, you just have to get up and try again!". Doesn't come from criticism and scolding: "Oh, you're a baby! You just give up! Every time you just give up." These things actually interfere with resilience.

08:40 Andrei: That's quite nice. I was listening to you and I was thinking. I imagine myself as a parent. After ten hours of hard work, I'm coming home, in my suit, and I have to play, I should play with my kid. So how can you find this extra strength or superpower of playing after ten difficult hours of hard working. How do you do this? How you find this? It's in a small bottle? Or how do you find it?

09:12 Larry: Well, if you're lucky, then getting out of your suit and putting on comfortable clothes and getting on the floor with your child will actually fill you up at the same time it fills your child up. This is the ideal and it doesn't always happen. And if it doesn't happen it's OK. But if you give that a chance, then sometimes it does happen. Sometimes we just don't give it a chance, like "I'm so tired! Give a drink!" Well, that's not really going to help you connect with your child.

Your child is gonna look at you and think: “I don’t want to grow up and go to work. Does not look fun.” But if you give it a chance and you get on the floor and... What I like to do is set a timer because nobody can be super enthusiastic forever. But we can all do anything for ten minutes. It’s almost nothing you can’t do for ten minutes. And I learned this when my daughter wanted to play “Ariel, the little mermaid” over and over again. And this was such a boring game. The way you play “Ariel, the little mermaid” was you take the dolls’ clothes off and you put new clothes on and you have a wedding. And you would do that over and over again. It was so boring. I was like “I can’t do it!”. And finally I realized I don’t have to do it all day. If I set a timer for ten minutes and I do it with extra enthusiasm for ten minutes, then that’s more valuable than two hours of me saying: “Oh, God! I hate this game!” So, I tried it and it really worked. And for that ten minutes I was like: “What are we gonna do? Oh, “Ariel, the little mermaid”? What a great idea! What should they do? Have a wedding? Wow! I’ve never thought of that.” And this very funny thing happened. The timer went off and I didn’t want to stop because we were having so much fun. And the other funny thing that happened is the game stopped being boring. The game got more creative. So, Emma, when I was saying “Wow!” instead of “Ahhh!”, then she... Soon we were having rock concerts and we were running around. The dolls were flying everywhere. It became a physically active, creative game. And I hated this game because you just moved your little fingers and have a wedding and so repetitive and this whole wedding business and this poor princess has to be rescued, but my enthusiasm for ten minutes changed her, opened up this door to creativity. It wasn’t her fault. I was thinking: “What’s wrong with her? Her play is so boring. She must be a boring kid.” No, it was my resistance that made her play boring. And then it changed me and I was not ready to stop. And I couldn’t believe it.

12:27 Andrei: Is this also related to experience? I mean, Larry, when you were a kid, you used to play? Because I’m thinking, if you don’t like to play as an adult, can you still learn how to play with your kids?

12:28 Larry: I’m glad you asked that, because many people assume that I just was born playing and kept playing and it’s not true at all. I had big difficulties in my childhood. I was timid and fearful and anxious. I wouldn’t say I’ve never played, but I did not play a lot. When I became a father I was very nervous. I would say “Be careful! Be careful!” all the time. I didn’t want any mess. I really had to look at myself in the mirror and say: “Who do I want to be for my child?” and

“What do I want to do with this anxiety?” For me, it wasn’t how I was raised. I think for a lot of people is like: ”I wanna break this circle.” My parents got beaten and their parents were beaten and I don’t want to beat my child”. For me it was more: “I am anxious and I see other people playing and I want to be a part of that. I don’t want to be blocked from that. And so, that was the circle that I needed to break. And so, I’m very proud when people are surprised by that now.

14:01 Andrei: Wow! Indeed, it’s a surprise. I couldn’t imagine that because I’m hearing a lot of this, also from my friends. “I’ve never played in my childhood so it’s difficult for me right now to understand why my kid wants to play so much”. But now I understand. Larry, part of your book “The Playful Parenting” is look within each parents that you have, the understanding of what’s going on with him, with her in their actions with his child or her child. It would be amazing if you could help us elaborate a little bit this concept.

14:36 Larry: Sure! I discovered this by accident. I discovered it by... Parents would ask me for advice and I was naïve and I would give them advice. They asked me for advice, I gave them advice. They wanted techniques, I gave them techniques. And then they had all come back or came back and says: “That didn’t work!” and I started to look at it and think: “Well, there’s a missing ingredient here, very big missing ingredient. The best techniques in the world can’t work if you’re still stuck in the same patterns, if you’re still stuck in the same mindset, if you still get triggered in the same ways and have emotions that you weren’t looking for, you weren’t expecting. And so, I started to call this “looking within” and this was the missing step. Even if you think an idea is a great idea, most people can’t put it into practice if they skip this step of looking within. And looking within means a self-reflection. If you’re always yelling at your child, instead of just “It’s fine, it’s no big deal! Every kid gets yelled at” or “I’m such a terrible parent, I’m such a terrible parent, I yell.” Neither of those is very helpful. Instead you look within and you say: “What are the exact moments when I yell? What is it that sets me off? Is it when I’m in a hurry? Is it when I’ve had a hard day at work? Is it if my child talks back to me and questions my authority? What is it that sets me off? And what exactly do I think, feel, say during that time? And what is my best guess about where is that come from?” Sometimes it’s obvious, like “Oh, yeah! Now I see. That’s what happened to me.” Sometimes it’s not so clear: “I don’t really know yet.” And then we think about: “What do I do? What do I want to do?” And so, we spend a few weeks, I call it “tracking your triggers”. Instead being a victim of your getting triggered, just getting set off into anger, frustration,

helplessness – those are the big ones for parents to get triggered into: helplessness, frustration, anger – instead, we track it and we try to understand it deeply and this makes it an enormous step. The other big thing for looking within is sharing our secret thoughts with someone. Parenting is lonely, parenting is isolated. Most parents think: “I’m the only one who loses it with my children. I’m the only one. None of my friends would ever want to go out to buy diapers and never come back. Only I’ve ever had that thought, only I’ve ever wanted to throw my kid out the window and then throw my spouse out the window after the kid. I’m the only one who had ever made that thought, but no, everybody has that thought. So, if we share these secret forbidden thoughts with someone, preferably with our children not listening, they don’t have to hear it. But this really saved my life as a young father. I would call this one friend – I had several different people who I did this with, but there was one especially that stands out – and I would call her and I would just “Ahhh!” I remember the idea of the little mermaid. This came out of one of these conversations. I called and I said: “I can’t play this one more time!” and she was encouraging me: “Just give it all out!” These were things I didn’t want to say to my daughter and I was ashamed to have these feelings. I’m supposed to want to play with my daughter, supposed to think that she’s wonderful and everything she does is wonderful, right? So, it was hard for me to share with my friend. I wanted to take that little mermaid and run over with the car and tell her that all these toys are made in sweatshops by children’s slave labor. It was this crazy stuff I was saying and I was laughing and laughing and my friend said: “Are you done? Are you enjoying your temper tantrum?” and I said: “I’m not having a temper tantrum!” “Yeah, I am having a temper tantrum.” And once I got all that out in a safe place, with my friend who is not gonna call the police, not gonna call get my kids taken away, that’s when I got the idea: “I’ve been telling her «Your favorite game in the whole world is stupid»”. And I would hate if somebody said to me: “Larry, your favorite thing in the whole world is stupid.” I would not like that. That’s what I’ve been saying to my daughter. I needed to do something different. And then I had the idea “ten minutes of extra-enthusiasm” and it worked. She was suspicious at first. I got off the phone and I said: “Hey, Emma! Do you want to play «The Little Mermaid»?” And she is like: “What? I never heard that before. Who are you and where’s my father?” This looking into yourself and then finding somebody you can share with, who won’t judge you or criticize you, these are the really powerful elements of “look within”.

20:31 Andrei: Larry, is this also an area where we should talk with a therapist? I mean, I’m hearing a lot in Romania about this: “Before becoming a parent, you should really look inside you and

understand who we are, what are your drawbacks, what are your issues from childhood.” Is this an area where your therapist should step in or it’s enough to have a friend and to talk with him like you shared your experience?

21:01 Larry: I think this is a very individual decision. I’ve trained as a therapist. That’s how I make my living and...

21:11 Andrei: So yes!

21:13 Larry: But I think that... The way I think about it is what, where do you feel safe. Because in order to be vulnerable, in order to share the truth about what was not right about your childhood, a place to share your most secret private hopes and dreams for yourself as a parent, a place to share your fears, you need to be safe. And for some people that’s in the safety of a therapist’s office with the promise of confidentiality and professional...The room is professional, the place is professional, the person is trained. For some people that’s the safety. Other people is like: “Ahh! That’s cold, that’s a stranger, that’s not safe. What’s safe is to stay with a friend. And then my friend shares with me and we get that safety because we’re on an equal footing.” And so, it’s not right or wrong, I would say, if you look inside and think: “What would make you more safe, feel more safe to share from the heart? Share with a friend or share with a therapist?” And use that as your judge. The other side we go to a therapist instead of a friend is if it’s really severe trauma, if it’s overwhelming to your friend. If your friend is like: “Ahh! Enough!” You shared with them for five minutes and they’re like: “Ahh!”, then “You know what? I think that I need somebody who can...who’s trained to hold this better.” So, I hope that answers the question.

23:00 Andrei: Yeah, it really answers because... and really, I like this approach of the comfort zone and with whom you are comfortable to talk with, not necessarily a therapist, but find your best peer. It’s very nice, I really cope with this. I want to go back a little bit on this playing, because is very nice and I’m very delighted to talk about this playing topic. It’s one of my favorites. Your playful approach might seem, might seem as a no limit approach parenting, but you do talk about limits. Can a child grow without limits?

22:38 Larry: No. Absolutely all children need limits. There’re times when we say: “No, you can’t do that.”, “No, you shouldn’t have done that.” And “No, you can’t have that.” These are healthy, they’re necessary. A child without limits is going to be a tyrant. They just think that they can just

do whatever they want and it doesn't matter who they hurt. So, we need limits, but what's different with playful parenting is how we set limits. Before "how" is how we think about limits. So, we say two parts. First is an invitation, it's kind of a radical invitation which is to get rid of the word "misbehavior" and to eliminate the word "misbehavior" from your vocabulary. And the second thing to think about: behavior that troubles you. And the reason is that if we think a child is misbehaved, then the only thing we can think of to do is to punish them. If misbehaved, we punish. But if it's troubling behavior, we can look under the surface and we can say: "Maybe they're overloaded with feelings. And maybe what they need is not punishment, but they need some support for their feelings. Maybe they just need some empathy. Maybe they just need: "Oh, you're so angry! That made you so angry that you just couldn't stop yourself from hitting. I just want to hear about you being angry and then we'll talk later about what you can do besides hitting when you get angry." And maybe that solves the problem and that is setting a limit because it is going to stop them from hitting. And in fact, it's going to stop them from hitting later much more than hitting them. There're so many parents – I have to say this, it's very common in Romania – they hit the child to stop them from hitting. You just have to hear it out loud and see it doesn't make any sense. They don't care about the words that you say, why you hit them. You're teaching them that if you're bigger you can hit them. You look under the surface and see what's going on. Maybe it's overloaded feelings. Maybe it's an unmet need. Maybe your child has been trying to get your attention because they really miss you and you've been working and when you're home, you're distracted and they don't get enough of you, they need more of you and they do something. We often belittle children and we say: "He just did that to get attention." But that doesn't make sense to me. The child does something outrageous to get attention. That means they need attention. Right?

26:35 Andrei: It's easy.

26:36 Larry: If a child is hungry and they're like: "Do something to get food", you wouldn't say: "You're just doing that to get food because you're hungry." "Yeah, I'm hungry! Feed me!" Their need for connection and attention is the same as the need for food. Children will die without it. We meet their needs. When we meet their needs better, there's less need for this. Sometimes, no matter what you understand, you'll still need to set a limit. You'll still need to say: "You can't hit the baby!" In playful parenting, we do set limits and we set them with connection. Yelling, hitting,

shaming, these things break connection. But if we say: “Oh, no, we’re not gonna hit the baby. Let’s find something more distracted for you to do.”, this is...you set the connection, you set the limit with warmth and that keeps the connection. Sometimes even it increases the connection, which is really a miracle. You’re setting a limit and you’re actually improving the connection. We do this sometimes with warmth: “Oh, no! You wished we could just go to grandma this weekend. Grandma is sick and we can’t go visit her, but you really wished we could. Oh, I know! It makes you feel so mad and it’s so unfair. You wished we could!” So, you just load on the warmth, because the limits are hard and we want to help children accept it and handle it. We can also sometimes set limits in a light-hearted way: “Oh, no! You don’t!” I have a lot of nieces and nephews and, when they were little, you know, they would get together and they would fight. If they’re just play fighting or whatever, it’s fine, but the big one is picking on the little one. I would say: “Hey! Come pick on someone your own size!” And this is funny, because I’m bigger than them. But it’s also funny because they get it, like they’re bigger than the baby, now I’m bigger than them, but I’m saying it with a smile. It’s not: “I’ll show you what it’s like to hit someone smaller than you!” which is just gonna teach them to hit someone smaller. So, this is much more fun than hitting the baby. When you hit a younger child, they scream. That’s kind of exciting, but then you get in trouble and that’s no fun. But if they come and they wrestle with me, they have a pillow fight with me, that’s fun. They can get their aggression out in a really healthy way, so it seems strange, but when we say “no”, try it with warmth, try it with a light-hearted way and see if that works. Let me give you one more example of light-hearted, if you have to say “no”. A child wants to buy something every time you go to the store and it’s frustrating and annoying. And you just start to say “no”. You say: “I’m never taking you to the store again!” and all the stuff. But you can say “no” in a light-hearted way by saying: “Wow! Wouldn’t that be cool, if we could buy every single thing in this store? And how bigger the house would we need if had every toy that is in this store? And how many rooms should we have in our giant palace?” and we’re starting to have this fantasy together. They’re getting something in fantasy that’s actually more important than the crappy little toy that they wanted.

30:32 Andrei: Very nice insides, Larry. Thanks a lot for sharing this. I want to build up a little bit further on a topic that you mentioned earlier a little bit and this is attention. You are quite well-known here in Romania, you’ve already been four times, we hope to see you more in the coming future. We have here - as also in other areas from Eastern Europe – the child is considered the

central value of the family and children have a duty to respect and love their parents. This is a duty. On the other hand, parents are expected to do whatever they can for the children, even sacrificing their own happiness. Children represent the highest goal for the parent. Is this something that you can say that we find also in other cultures, in other areas, in other countries? Because sometimes this puts a lot of pressure on the children, so... The child is becoming an adult and an adult, no matter how much the play was involved and the attention is too much.

31:44 Larry: I think this is a common problem. I've seen it in places around the world and there's this contradiction, many contradictions. One is: parenting is the most important job in the world and yet, they're not paid. Parents aren't paid. Opposite of being paid. Now it's a pandemic, parents are really bearing a lot on their shoulders. You have to be a home teacher and work and ... It's really becoming impossible or it's shown that it's always been impossible. Now it's more clear. So that's a weird contradiction. "Oh, yes, it's so important! So important!" Then, children are so precious, children are so precious, but we hit them, we yell at them, tell them they're stupid, criticize them. Well, they don't do that to their most precious thing. I think there's just this pile of confusions and there's also a funny sense that respect... Let's take respect for example. It's a precious commodity and that is scarce. It's a scarce resource and the children have to give it to parents. And if you suggest that maybe parents could respect children, the instant response is: "Well, then children won't respect parents". It's like: "No, that's not how it works. Respect is a kind of resource that multiplies, it grows when is shared. It's a very different kind of resource than money, you know? I give it to you and I don't have it anymore. Now you have it. Well, I give you respect, then you feel good, you feel ready to respect back. The best way to have children respect parents is for parents to teach children to respect by respecting them.

34:03 Andrei: Nice.

34:05 Larry: Seems simple. I think it is simple. It's not: "I'll show you who needs respect!" Children fear that kind of violent authority, but that's not the deepest kind of respect. Fear for your life is not... That's not true respect. True respect is really: "I see you. I admire you, I want to follow you because you're a great role model. I really want to be like you." Listening also is one of these things that seems like a scarce commodity. And I guess, you know, as a therapist, you get paid by people to listen. It's like: "Yeah, yeah, it's scarce. Should pay a lot." But actually, if I listen to you and then you listen to me this resource keeps expanding, doesn't run out.

35:01 Andrei: Right.

35:03 Larry: So, in the family, if parents listen to children and don't just demand that children listen to them, then the listening in the family will grow and grow and grow. So common for parents to say: "My child doesn't listen." How do you make a child listen? You can't make a child listen. Fear interferes with listening. You grow listening and you model it. "Oh, tell me all about it." And this is true if a child is excited. It's so common, a child is really excited about something. To the parent is nothing, it's no big deal. "Oh, you just discovered some stupid thing. I've known for years." Yes, exactly. Are you excited about something little and dumb? Yeah, they really need you to say: "Wow! You did what? Oh, my gosh!" And to really turn towards them and hear it and see them when they're excited. And the same when they're sad. Instead of "Big deal! It was a doll. So it got lost. No big deal!" Yes, it is a big deal to them. If we show that we care, we have to really care and show that we care, then they develop a good heart. Then they can give you genuine respect.

36:44 Andrei: Nice. But also play, playing with kids could help this area that we've just talked. Because I was thinking and remembering what you're saying at the beginning of our discussion. Playing really destroys all these boundaries, all these patterns. Just by playing and just by saying: "OK, let's imagine we put all these toys in our house, how many rooms..." I mean, this is amazing. This is amazing. It creates me a little bit of creativity in imagine...

37:19 Larry: Play is a great way to solve everyday problems too. When my granddaughter was about to start her preschool, I think you call it kindergarten. She was gonna go to school for the first time and she was scared. She thought it was a great idea until she realized no other grown-ups were going with her. Then she was like: "No, I don't want to go!" So, she's in the bathtub and she says to her grandma: "Let's play school!" This was very smart. Then she wanted to be the teacher. She wanted to be the mommy and she wanted grandma to have a little doll that was the kid going to school. It was like: "I don't want to go to school. Are you going to be with me, mommy?" And my granddaughter says: "No, you have to go by yourself." "I don't want to go by myself!" "You'll have fun." And our granddaughter saying all the things that we said. She was fighting against when we said them, but now she's playing, so she says: "You'll have fun and I'll pick you up, you'll tell me all about the things you did." So, play releases all that tension that have built up.

38:36 Andrei: But is there a risk? Playing too much, to create a huge gap between reality when the children is growing up and enters in this chaotic world and the moments when it was just a play and the playing was nice. So how do you manage to do this step into the real world?

38:59 Larry: I've never seen that actually to be a problem. I've heard the fear many times. I've never actually seen a problem. Real life presents enough reality and frustration for any kid. We don't have to make up more. There's schedules, which is not children's idea, that's an adult idea. There's school, right? There's you get sick. There's bad things happen. Reality is there. I think it will be mistaken to say: "We can't play too much, we can't play too much! We have to prepare children for reality." No, reality is gonna be there. Let's have children be able to have inner strength. Let me say it another way: when a child meets reality, when they hit a setback, we want them to have an inner voice that says: "Oh, this is hard, but you can do it!" Sometimes our inner voice is "I" and sometimes is "You", right? So, we might have an inner voice that says: "I can do it! I can do it!" or an inner voice that says: "You can do it! You can do it!" or "Oh, that was terrible! But it's not over. Get up! Try it again!" This is what we want to have inside of our children. If we yell at our children all day, they're not gonna have that voice inside of them.

40:40 Andrei: For sure.

40:42 Larry: They're gonna hit a setback and the voice inside of their head is gonna be: "You idiot!" or "Oh, I'm such an idiot!" 'cause they were told they're an idiot 500 times. This is not "prepare a child for reality". We also don't want the child to face reality and face a setback and say: "Oh, it doesn't matter."

41:10 Andrei: Exactly.

41:12 Larry: So, this is why we do need limits. A child knocks over the lamp 'cause they running around wild and we say: "Oh, it doesn't matter. You keep playing, I'll just clean it up." When the child faces a setback is like: "Oh, it doesn't matter." Or they get married and discuss: "You've been a jerk." "It doesn't matter." Right? So, what do we do when they're a kid and they're excited and they hit the lamp and knock it over, we say: "Oh, my goodness! You were so excited and when you get so excited you kinda forget where your arms are and where your legs are and you knocked a lamp over. So, let's calm down a little bit and you help me clean the lamp up. And maybe we can look together and see what's breakable in the house. We can have places for running and places

not for running. And then we'll calm down because I know you're excited, but we need to just not have everything be breaking." So, we address it, we take care of it, but we're not saying: "You, clumsy idiot!" and we're not saying: "Oh, it doesn't matter. I'll clean it up, my poor precious child!"

42:39 Andrei: Larry, I would spend, to be honest, two days with you to learn and to... I think you have really...a real chance to convince me to become a parent. These are my vibes these days. You seem like a superman of parenting. So, I have a question, a preferred question that actually it's ending our discussion, beautiful discussion. Larry, please, share with me. Which was your biggest parenting challenge so far? Yes, I know...

43:21 Larry: Well, when... I became a father first and then, some years later, 13 years later, I became a stepfather. I became a stepfather for a ten year' old boy, who's now 27 years old. But we have a very close relationship. But when he was ten, he didn't trust me, he didn't want me around, he wanted his mom all to himself, you know, all the usual things. He was a boy, I figured it out all these girl stuff with my daughter. So, it was a very big challenge to connect and to figure out my role, my role as a stepfather. I'm not a father, I'm not just a nobody, I am somebody in his life. What we figure it out was we did a lot of wrestling. And he was really strong and he had study karate for years. It was loud and my wife, his mom, could not be in the room while we were wrestling. He could've hurt me, but he held back, and I could've hurt him, but I held back, and we really learnt a lot about each other by wrestling and making sure nobody got hurt, but really going all out. And this was not easy. It was...I had to kind of trust that I wouldn't get too badly hurt, that I wouldn't accidentally hurt him, get in trouble with my wife. So yeah, I would say that's the biggest challenge I had so far.

45:27 Andrei: Thanks a lot for sharing this with us. Lawrence Cohen, thank you for being present with us today. It was a real pleasure. I really hope that we could have a talk when I'll become a parent and I'll share with you a little bit of my challenges. But until then I'll stick...I'll stay very close to your books and to your new books. Hope to hear soon, hope to stay health, to be health and to stay safe and all my best wishes to you and to your family. Thanks a lot for being present with us today!

46:05 Larry: Thank you, Andrei! And I really hope I can come back to Romania soon.**46:10**

Andrei: Thank you. Have a nice day!