

Power-Full by Lisa Marie Lindenschmidt

I always find myself stuck in the middle of letting go and hanging on – with my kid, with my husband, with my finances, with my emotions... just to name a few. This sense of spiritual and emotional vertigo, this pulling between disparate directions, is one I could do without. Let me give you a recent example.

Mo had a few warts on her feet. I did some research on the internet to see what my options were for homeopathic treatment. I found that taking echinacea tincture internally in addition to applying tea tree oil directly to the warts could be effective. Since it seemed the least invasive, I told Mo about it and said, “So, we’ll start that tonight and see if it works.” She said, casually, “Well, I’ll think about it.” I said, utterly confused, “What? Why?” She said, “It’s my body and I’ll decide if I want to do that or not.”

And what was Lisa Marie's brilliant response? I mumbled, “Well, we’ll see.” And I walked away, noticing that I was feeling hurt. What was going on here?

Mo is 12. She is also homeschooled, quite clear about her needs and... a raw foodist. All these can be a deadly combination – especially for a parent that's stuck in an old paradigm of the parents making the health care decisions for their children. My husband and I are raising her within an environment where questioning is encouraged and expected, where power-over structures are broken down and analyzed, and where self-empowerment is required. I hate this. This means that I have to let her make her own choices! If I let her do that, how do I play the mom?!

OK. So, obviously, I need to step back here. Why were my feelings hurt? Why am I hating this independence when I've encouraged it for 12 years? And what does it really mean to be a mom if power-over isn't allowed?

Why were my feelings hurt?

My immediate response was defensiveness: “Hel-LO! I'm the mom! Obviously, I know what's best here! I've got 28 years on you, kid! I just spent all that time researching warts and you'll *think about it?!*”

So, as I walked away, all these thoughts were clamoring for attention, each one putting up a hell of a fight. I took a few breaths, did some dishes, and thought, “OK. She's not saying she doesn't appreciate you looking up an answer. She's not saying she doesn't respect your opinion. She just wants to think about it.”

This hurting, I think, is because I'm recognizing that our relationship has begun to change. A leveling of the playing field is happening. All the tools that I've given her are starting to be used. She is becoming more and more aware of how food and medicine and thoughts can affect her and is exercising control over what she lets in. Oh, man. Am I ready for this? Can I let go of the toddler mom and build a new mom that is less about power-over and more about power-with?

Why am I hating this independence when I've encouraged it for 12 years?

I hate it because it means I have to change. It means I have to look inside and see which of my tools aren't needed anymore and replace them with new ones. And, most importantly, it means that I have to do all of this with grace and honesty without getting sucked into negative self-talk.

And what does it really mean to be a mom if power-over isn't allowed?

I don't know yet. I get glimmers every now and then of authenticity and lightness and being the best of friends with my kid. Maybe that's what it means. Or it could mean just living by example and letting her go... and knowing that my love for her is enough.

It's scary to be somewhere unknown. All you can do is pull from your own toolbox and trust that you have everything you need. And if you don't, maybe you can ask your kid.

Lisa Marie Lindenschmidt is a raw foods chef and teacher and owner of Rite Food and Company (www.ritefoodandcompany.com), which offers workshops on intentional and joyful eating. Lisa Marie and her homeschooled daughter, Mo, record a weekly podcast – called Sweet Peas Podcast – chronicling their raw foods journey together.