

[00:00:00] **Rosa Linda Román:** Hello and welcome to New Mexi-Castaways, the enchanting podcast where I, Rosa Linda Román, share lots of different things, but I usually call it Rosa Linda's Ramblings. I am a mother of three and I live currently in Round Rock, Texas, which is a suburb of Austin. But a lot of what I talk about here on the podcast are lessons learned from living on a sailing catamaran.

[00:00:54] The boat was called the Dawn Treader, and she has been on my mind a lot lately as I have two teenagers, well, one's a preteen, but she might as well be a teenager. And I also have an eight-year-old son, so Ahava is 14, Ziva is 12 and Samuel is eight. Anyway, the boat's on my mind a lot. Part of it is that I just came from Florida, went on a trip with my husband, Nathan.

[00:01:15] He went to Florida for a business trip and I tagged along, because I flew with him, which is a nice feature from Southwest Airlines. Thank you so much Southwest, this is good news. The bad news is, the reason we have that is he travels so much for work that he has the companion status, which basically means that he has flown so much that he gets this extra part.

[00:01:36] Part of it is we use our credit card as well to get extra miles, but he travels a lot. Lately, it hadn't been too bad since we came to Austin. But anyway, so I'm out up for a walk with Nala and I wanted to, normally, this time I'm listening to my favorite podcast, which currently my list, the one that I usually listen to on these walks is the The Life Coach School Podcast with Brooke Castillo, and she is awesome.

[00:02:03] So, I like to take this morning time to kind of feed my brain and really work on myself a lot for self-improvement. I'll often listen to Tony Robbins, who is my all-time favorite mentor, but lately, I'm working my way through Brooke Castillo's podcast and what she calls The Program.

[00:02:20] So, anyway, instead of listening to that, I realized I had a lot to say this morning, and I just kind of, I'm going to take a more leisurely walk home instead of my usual jog back and then get the day started in full swing. I actually do have to get back at a decent point, because I have a meeting set up with my friend Kim Iverson. She is working with me in, well, we started as a project management capacity, but I'm quickly realizing that's not really the best use of her talent and I definitely need the help.

[00:02:52] So, we're working on kind of redefining what she'll be doing for me on New Mexicast. And so, anyway, I know I've got a lot all over the place, but hopefully, you're going with the flow with me today, which by the way, is a little paper that... I use this little book, it says, "I think I'll just be happy today."

[00:03:10] I found it at a campground once when I was, I want to say it was in the, not Seattle, up in the Washington State or maybe Oregon area. Anyway, there was this little book and it says, it's just these little pages that you rip out and send to people, and they're just happy statements. And the one that is my current bookmark, which is how I'll rip something out if it sticks with me and put it in a book that I'm reading.

[00:03:30] And the book that I'm reading is just Do It! Let's Get Off Our Buts, as in B-U-T-S, meaning to give up your excuses and the bookmark from that little book is just go with the flow and it's a picture of a happy little whale. And that is what I'm trying to do lately, just go with the

flow and that's what this podcast is going to be, just a chance to kind of let it flow, because I do have a lot on my mind. I just took Samuel for his walk to school. He skates and I walk/jog with Nala, our now almost three-year-old German Shepherd, and kind of a weird, not terribly, it was rough in some ways, but not as rough as it has been lately.

[00:04:13] I've been struggling with Samuel in the local school. School is delightful and honestly, I feel like they're doing all the things right that they can be doing, and that is why this is on my mind, because he has been very unhappy and telling everybody that he's unhappy, and not wanting to go to school, and really just dragging his feet to the point of, like, torture to whoever's trying to help him get to school.

[00:04:38] I mean, last week before I left to Florida, Samuel had a moment morning that he refused to get dressed. I mean, completely refused to get dressed. So, Nathan had to dress him, and then he wouldn't put his shoes or socks on at all, and I literally had to carry him to the car to take him to school.

[00:04:56] And as we were driving to the school, I said, "Okay, you're either going to get out of this car with no shoes on." Kind enough to bring his shoes for him and socks. And I said, "Either you're going to put those on." I literally said to him, "If you do not put your shoes in socks on, I promise you we're going to pull up to this drop-off lane. I'm going to kick you out of the car and I'm going to throw your shoes and socks out the door with you."

[00:05:19] And that's what kind of morning it was. Now, that morning was the morning after and to me, an even worse day, when I, basically, went through all the same thing to get him to school, got him finally, like physically got him dressed, physically, got him in the school, got him checked in, he was late.

[00:05:36] And normally I don't care, but apparently, here it's a really big deal. And the reason I know that is I got a call from the vice principal later, after all of this, saying that it was a really big deal. Anyway, so that morning after he got off to school late and went off to his class, I was there in the office and I just started crying.

[00:05:56] And I'm like, "Okay, this is not what I want to be doing at his school, crying in the office." But the guidance counselor was super nice. They called her up and said, "Hey, do you maybe want to talk with her?" And I said, "Sure." So, and she's actually a friend of mine. She does Camp Gladiator at the same time that I do. So, I really like her and she just kind of talked me down from the ledge and I, you know, got over my feeling sorry for myself, and feeling like a failure parent, and just, like, reminded myself like, this is ridiculous. And just because Samuel doesn't want to go to school, you know, it's not a reflection on me as a parent.

[00:06:32] And it's more than that. Nobody wants to see their kid unhappy and he's a happy kid in general. It really tested me. So, that was that first morning, then the second morning was the morning that I basically said, "You will go into that building barefoot." And I was really proud of myself because I basically shifted it off of me and being my responsibility, and like my burden, and put it back where it belonged in his court and said, you know, he had the right to face those consequences to walk into school barefoot, right?

[00:07:00] But he didn't have the right to not go to school and he didn't have the right to make it miserable like so that I internalized it. He can't control me. Only I can control me. And so, I really tried to remind myself that, and it is hard, hard, hard work. By the way, when I was in Florida, I was reading my manuscript, or which is a memoir, I'm working on finishing the draft of the memoir that I wrote about living on the boat.

[00:07:25] And this was the first time that I've been reading it to Nathan. And so, I was reading it to him and going through some of the things that I talk about from living on the boat. I realize living on the boat or pretty much any of our living experiences, to me, the bottom line is how it affect relationships and what it teaches us and what we can... It basically is a tool. If you live in a regular neighborhood with regular people and don't live on a boat, or in a camper, or world school, and travel the world, you still face these same things, the same things we learned from those adventures you learn in your regular life, just with different things being the catalyst that trigger the learning.

[00:08:06] I'm realizing more and more like whether it's that we're at a rough anchorage, our boat with our family, and trying to get them to help while we need them to unfurl the sail or fill the water tanks, whatever the thing might be, it's getting the kids to do what they need to do, when they need to do it, to take personal responsibility and learning to communicate with each other during this process and that is so incredibly hard.

[00:08:35] It's hard, hard, hard work. And obviously, it's super important. Like, what is more important than this? So, that's what's on my mind. And so, the reason I brought up Florida and reading the memoir is it really hit me when I was reading to Nathan, you know, that we really have come a long way. I mean, between... there's so many lessons that we've learned from living on the boat and I'm really proud of how I handled things this morning.

[00:09:00] Even on that second morning, I was really happy with the way that I shifted it from being this utter despair and feeling like a failure personally to, okay, so what can I do to help Samuel through this while he will be facing potentially the consequences of his inaction or his behavior? So, that I tried to shift that, and then gratefully, I had the trip to Florida right after that.

[00:09:26] So, I was able to take a break from him to move things forward a little bit more in a positive way. We had a wonderful babysitter who stayed with the kids and I was so grateful because even though the trip, it wasn't a pleasure trip at all, Nathan worked the whole time, and then he ended up sick, and it was kind of funny because yesterday was Valentine's Day and it was pretty much the saddest Valentine's Day in terms of like celebrating it that we've ever had.

[00:09:50] But I was happy, I really didn't care too much, because I was back with my loves and Nathan slept the whole day and night because he was under the weather. And for the record, doctors make a worst patient in case you didn't know. And so, Nathan sick is like torture for everyone in his entire blast radius. So, I was very grateful that he just went to bed and put himself to sleep so that he could kind of be out of the way, especially because my mommy has arrived.

[00:10:16] My mom flew in yesterday when we were flying in from Florida. She flew in from Chicago, because tonight we are going to Jeff Dunham. I gave her Jeff Dunham ticket with us. I

gave it to her back for the holidays and I was so delighted to see that she made the flight and she's here. So, my mom is here, Nathan is sick. Hopefully, he's going to feel better by tonight, because tonight the Jeff Dunham concert, and yeah. So, that is, I don't know what I was saying, so I'm going to have to rewind for a second. Anyway, I want to pause and make sure the audio sounds okay. So, I will continue my thoughts after I remind myself what I was talking about in just a minute. Please stand by.

[00:10:58] All right, I am back and that is hilarious. My brain is so fried sometimes I was like, oh, what am I talking about? So, yes, Valentine's Day, Happy my mom's here, Nathan is sick. Hopefully, he's going to be better very soon. But the main thing that I wanted to talk about is this morning with Samuel, and I've already talked a little bit about just kind of how the setup happened and just the history, recent history of how he's been unhappy with school, and I'm not sure if I've talked about it this podcast already.

[00:11:27] But the reason a lot of... I figured out the three reasons that he's unhappy with school, at least this is what I could figure out. And that is number one thing is that his teacher had changed the standard. She moved the goal post per se, so that when he used to come home every day, blue, he used to come home being excited because he was on blue, which is the highest honor you can get in the class.

[00:11:48] And now all he gets is green, which is totally acceptable and fine. But basically, his teacher at the beginning of the year announced that it's going to be harder to get on blue now, because the kids should know better and be older, and they have to go above and beyond, which sounds good, but when that's the only thing, the main thing that he looks forward to every single day, I actually think that's a mistake because you know, later in the year it's harder to focus because now you know that, like you just came from the holidays and then you go back to find out you don't have the ability to be on blue plus.

[00:12:22] Plus we've talked about it on the podcast, but so if I have, I apologize, but I'm going to repeat it because it bears repeating. I've learned a lot from having Samuel in public school in a school setting. It's been interesting, I realize, and that's why I wanted to title this Little Boys on this episode because the big thing that I'm learning and realizing is that I am struggling with the boy factor.

[00:12:44] I was a mom of two girls before I ever had a boy, and so I went through the experiences in school that I had at the elementary level with my daughters, because they both went through to public school in New Mexico. And plus, the school systems are very diff. In a small community in New Mexico and they just succeeded, and excelled, and both had no problem going through the system, if you will.

[00:13:10] And I mean, just behaviorally, it's like a teacher says do this, you do this and you don't, you know, draw attention to yourself, and you basically, you know, do really well in school. And you know, they also are gifted so they loved school and they felt accomplished. Well, I'm having a very different experience with Samuel, who is equally gifted, and equally intelligent, and equally kind, and pretty much like disposition wise, very similar to my other kids as far as like, you know, he wants to please the teacher, he wants to be in school, he loves learning.

[00:13:42] You know, we're fortunate he doesn't have any major like, physical things that stand in the way of his ability to be present in school. So, I'm telling you all of this, not to brag on my kid, but so that you get some perspective and realize that I'm talking from a place of like, they're pretty much apples to apples except for the fact that Samuel is a boy, and he does move differently, and he's high energy and all of that.

[00:14:04] But my girls were high energy too. So, all of this to say the thing that is interesting or the thing that was painful to realize was that he does not feel like he's got the potential to succeed in his classroom. And the reason I say that he did not say that. I say that because his teacher, he told me one week, he didn't get to be on blue the whole five days. And if you're on blue five days, you get a special reward from the teacher. Like, you get to pick from a prize box. He was only on blue four days and he was so upset and he was tearful after school one week. And I said, "Yeah, but it's like most people don't get on blue." I said, "Probably nobody gets on blue every day, right"

[00:14:43] And he goes, "No, that's not true." And he named several people who, several kids who had been on blue every day. And I noticed that they were all girls' names. And I was like, "Are they all girls?" And he said, "Yeah." And I said, "Oh, you know, are there any boys that are on blue all the time or that have been on blue, you know, five days?"

[00:15:01] And he said, "No, it's always just the girls are the only ones that make it on blue every day." And I was like, "Oh, that's interesting." Didn't make a big deal about it. But then I was like, "So, as far as the boys go, compare yourself, like, are you about the same as the rest of the boys? Are you better? Like, in terms of being on blue, are you on blue more or less?" He said, "Oh no, I'm the best one in the class. I'm on blue as much as anyone as you know." I was like, "Oh, okay." So, like he's the best boy in the class as far as, you know, behaviorally, according to the teacher because, you know, based on the fact that he's been on blue more than anyone else, you know, or at least that's his self-assessment may not be accurate, accurate.

[00:15:40] But my point is he's on blue and he's trying, and that is, I think, the thing you want to reward, right? So, number one reason he said not wanting to go to is because he has a harder time he hasn't been on blue the whole time, it's February 15th now, and he's never been on blue since the beginning of the year, and he was on blue like three or four times a week, many weeks, pretty much every week, except for like maybe one or two bad weeks where he was on two days a week, but he's never been on blue since the beginning of the year. So, that's one thing.

[00:16:08] Then there's the second thing that he was telling himself a story that nobody wants to be with him, nobody wants to play with him, he has no friends. And he was feeling sorry for himself. And it was because, and I think I did talk about this all on this podcast, so I'm going to just wrap that up and not get into it anymore in depth.

[00:16:27] But basically, to say that he was just feeling like nobody wanted to play with him, and he had no friends, and he doesn't know anyone because we're pretty new. But the third thing was that he wasn't challenged educationally either. And I did have a conversation with the Vice Principle about this. He was struggling with school or not wanting to go to school.

[00:16:44] He actually wasn't struggling, really. The whole point of me telling you all of this is that this morning Samuel was doing pretty well with the morning, but as we got closer and closer to the time of having to get ready to leave, he started running, like, he started moving into that I feel sorry for myself, depression, you know, kind of mentality.

[00:17:04] And he was starting to kind of play the script that he didn't want to go to school, and he was miserable, and it wasn't that bad. I mean, he was kind of just moving slowly, but I noticed it. Like, I could see the signs starting and I got him ready, he got his skates on, and we have a rule, because in order for him to skate in the morning, it takes, you know, a lot more time than driving.

[00:17:26] And so, there's two different ways we can go. There's the shortcut, which I'm actually walking through right now, which kind of goes through like an off-road, not very much, it's just a little path between, it gets you, it's like maybe three-quarters of a mile. Whereas if we go the long way, it's a mile and a quarter and we both love doing the mile and a quarter better than short.

[00:17:49] But the rule is he has to be completely skates on, ready to go by 7:05 in order to go the long way. Otherwise, we won't make it in time. So, Samuel and I really like to take the long way because it's longer, it's more time together. We talk, we enjoy our mornings, our morning time is joyful. We both feel that way. And so, I always am telling him he has to get himself ready to go by 7:05 so we could take the long way, but even the short way is still super great and enjoyable together when he skates, we hold hands, and we talk. I love it and he loves it. But if he's not ready by 7:15, we can't even take the long way. We have to drive because he won't get there in time.

[00:18:28] So, today he was getting ready, and he was dragging his feet, and dragging his feet, and dragging his feet, and I was like trying to stay positive. But I'm also trying to remember the Nurtured Heart Approach. The idea is you don't want to reinforce the negative in any way.

[00:18:42] Like, you just kill it with inattention, if you will, and really just reinforce the positive every way you see it, even the smallest, easy, simple thing that they do. So, I was trying not to, you know, move toward the negative and give him the negative attention, because they say it's like handing the kid a \$50 bill. Every time he misbehaves and you yell at him, it's like giving him a \$50 bill. Maybe that was not the Nurtured Heart Approach. There's another book that I read called Have a New Kid by Friday, and that may have been more that approach. Anyway, one of those parenting books that I'm trying, you know, I always try to like read things and take what I can from them, and I apologize for not remembering where I got this from.

[00:19:25] But the idea is whenever you reward negative behavior by giving attention to them for it, whether it's negative attention, still, it's like handing them a \$50 bill, giving them a hundred dollars bill, a \$50 bill, whatever. Like, you're telling them what you're doing is making me stop everything and I'm going to pay attention to you, which is what they want is attention, right?

[00:19:43] So, you want to have them want to do the good things so you pay attention to them for that. It's very hard. It's very hard because when they're in the moment misbehaving, you want

to correct the behavior, but you want to do it in a way without making them go, "Oh, I just got a \$50 bill."

[00:20:00] So, this morning he was dragging his feet very, very slow moving and driving me crazy, because I'm like, "There's no reason for it." And so, I kind of pointed out to him, I said, "You know, I noticed something that you're starting to run the script for, 'I hate going to school.'" I said, "We were having a really nice morning, you know, you did all the things you were supposed to, got dressed, got breakfast, did all those things, and yet all of a sudden I noticed your body change.

[00:20:25] Like, I said, 'Go get the skates on.' And instead of doing that, you went and started scribbling on a piece of paper." And he said, "Yeah, you know..." He recognized that what I said is right. Think of it like this. It's like coding your brain. I was trying to speak in, you know, cool young people's terms because I said running a script. And I don't think you've fully understood that. But when I said, "It's like you're coding your brain and you were coding your brain to run this program and that program is hates to go to school. The program that you've been running. You've run this same script over and over again, and I noticed there's certain times where you start to initiate that code and start to run that script or that program.

[00:21:03] And right now I've noticed you're running your..." I called it the Schleppey Samuel script, or Schleppey Samuel Code, or something like that. "And you know, and then that doesn't serve you, and then it makes the people around you angry, because you're not doing the things that you know you're supposed to be doing and they know you're supposed to be doing, and they get angry. And so, by running this script, it's not serving you. So, if instead, you notice you're feeling that way and you want to run that script, you do something different, and you run a different script, and say to yourself in that moment, 'I love school. I can't wait to go see..."

[00:21:35] You know, and focus on like a friend that you can't wait to see or focus on, you know, what is this special class that you have today, because he always like specials, like art, and music, and Spanish, and PE. So, I said, "What's the special you have today and what are you looking forward to for that?" You know? So, I tried to like, in that moment tell him not to run the what was me script or the program. So, not to code the program negative.

[00:21:59] He got totally ready, kind of, I helped him or he was getting his skates on and he wouldn't finish, and he would not finish getting his skates on. And so, this morning when he finally got his skate on, it was already 17 after, and actually, this happened like at 12 after, so he had time to get totally ready. He started saying, "Well, of course I'm not going to be able to do it because I'm a terrible person."

[00:22:22] I was like, "I don't want to hear you say that and that's ridiculous, get ready". So, I just kind of tried to ignore it and I walked away. I came back. He was barely any further along, and so I helped him get his skates on, and finally, we get out the door. Technically, I should have not taken him at that point because I should have driven him because it was 17 after, but he didn't have a watch, so I kind of let it have a little wiggle room, which I know that was not the best plan.

[00:22:46] But anyway, I did go skate with him. We started going and I said, "Samuel, you know, what you said, I want you to take that back." He said, "No, I am a terrible person." He said, "There's nothing I like about myself." That's what he said, "Or there's nothing good about me." And I was like, "That is ridiculous. Like, the worst thing you've ever said."

[00:23:04] And he started like just kind of playing this role of pretending like he really felt that way, and he was in this funk, and this, you know, acting dark. And I said, "Samuel, I want to hear you say that the right way. You know that is a lie." And he did not want to, he was like fighting me on it. And I said, "You know that's a lie and you are not a liar."

[00:23:23] And he said, "No, it's true. I know. Nobody likes me and there's nothing good about me and I'm a terrible person." And I was like, "That is the worst thing you've ever said." And I said to him, I said, "You know, that violates our family policy of no self-abuse." When we were living on the boat, we developed, I did, with the kids, actually the whole family, we developed a list of things that we do or do not do as a family. Like, basically, our family values. And it was things like respect other people's property, and be kind, and help others. One of the things, and they're really cute. If you're part of our New Mexi-Castaways tribe. I'll put a picture of our chart, the photo, Google Photo album.

[00:24:05] But it's really funny because it has a picture of a little icon choking himself, and it says, "No self-abuse." That's really funny. So, no self-abuse. And I told him this, I said, "You know, that goes against our family policy. Like, you can't say that. I want to hear you change that." "No, no, no." And he was like, for a few blocks he was insistent that, you know, he had no redeeming values in this world and I was just like, I wanted to like, fight him on it. But instead, I said, "If you can't find anything, if this is true, and you have nothing good about you, then I guess you don't really deserve all the privileges that you have. So, I'll take away your computer and your tablet. I'm taking them away."

[00:24:45] And the more he insisted he had nothing good about him, the more I said, "Okay you're going to lose your tablet and your computer forever if you don't tell me five things right now that you do like about yourself." He said, "I don't have any, there aren't any." And so, we went, you know, a few more rounds, few more blocks. Finally, he said, "Well, I'm nice. I like that I'm nice." I said, "I like that you're nice, that's great." And then eventually he came back with, "I like that I make friends easily." I was like, "Oh my gosh, thank God, you know, we've made some progress."

[00:25:16] And then what else did he say? "I like that I'm smart. Oh, I love that I'm creative." And he came up with one other one. So, I was just like, and then I said, "Okay, the thing you said earlier restate it in truth, in what you're actually the truth of it now." And he said, "I love myself." And I just like, as a mom, I wanted to cry at that moment cause you're like, "Okay." So, then I get into this whole talk with him, the rest walk, where I basically said, "Listen, this is life. Like, this is what we humans go through in our lives, because we go through this in our lives and we tell ourselves that nobody loves me and I have no redeeming value, and then you have to find the journey back to the light."

[00:25:58] When you do that and you find a way to come out of the darkness, that's a recipe, right?" I told him that. I said, "Okay, so you just reprogrammed your brain and you made it so

that you went from that dark place to this is the light. You came back out into the light." And so, I said to him, I said, "This is really important because one day you'll be a teenager, you'll be, you know, out of the house, and you're going to need to find a way to change the code and reprogram your brain so that come out of the darkness. You might have a bad day or you might have a bad week."

[00:26:36] And he said, "Or maybe a bad 10 days." I said, "Yeah, maybe a bad 10 days. But you now know you can remember this skating with your mom, and you now know that you have the recipe, you have the secret code, if you will, to reprogram your own brain and hold on to that."

[00:26:51] You know, he kind of thought about it and he goes, "Okay." He goes, "But you know, I don't want to leave home mommy." And he goes, "Because I don't think I ever will. I think I'm going to always be with you." I'm like, "Yes. I'm sure that's true." But anyway, so I wanted to share that with you guys for a number of reasons.

[00:27:05] One, I think that the reason I said that to him, besides the fact that I was very happy that he had gone through that journey, I was proud of myself for being there and helping him through it. But I also realized that I have a lot of fear about how to raise a healthy young man, because I have seen a lot of people and I feel this way about young women too, there's definitely the questions about people making poor choices, and you know, what happens with drugs, and alcohol, and, I don't know, sex issues, and all of that. I worry with girls just as much, but I feel like I can talk a little bit more to the girls on a different level sometimes, or maybe they process it differently.

[00:27:45] But I also have just seen so many young men who have so much potential and they don't love themselves. I don't want that for my son, obviously. And so, I just realized that that, you know, when I was talking afterwards, when I was walking with him after this all happened, I was like, "Wow, I feel like that was a really profound moment, but why?"

[00:28:05] And it's because I do worry about, you know, what does it all mean for him as he moves into, you know, becoming a teenager and beyond. So, hopefully, that helps give him something in his toolbox. And yeah, it was a moment I thought I would share. I am actually back home now, so I'm going to wrap this up, but let me know what you think about this whole thing and how do you help people you love to improve their own lives and, you know, what does that look like for you?

[00:28:33] For now, I'm going to wrap it up and say thank you for listening to New Mexi-Castaways and if you want to join the New Mexi-Castaways tribe, please go to newmexicat.com and you'll find all the information to do that. All right, we'll talk to you soon. Thanks for listening to Rosa Linda's Ramblings. Thanks for listening. Bye.