



## Podcast 01: Laura Gauld: “Taking the Long View in Parenting”

Pam Hardy: Our first podcast of *Parenting Teens, the Biggest Job We'll Ever Have*, brings us Laura Gauld. I've know Laura for a long time. She's been a mentor, a friend, she's my boss, and she was part of the village that helped me raise my children. In this podcast Laura describes the need for taking the long view in parenting. A student at Hyde herself, she understood, even as a teenager, the importance of character in her life. She's devoted her life to helping both students and parents develop character, not only as individuals, but character in their families. Let's listen and see what she has to say about the importance of taking the long view in parenting our kids.

Laura, thanks very much for being with us today. How are you?

Laura: I'm great; how are you, Pam?

Pam Hardy: I'm good, thanks. You are initiating this podcast for Hyde School, which is called Parenting Teens, the Biggest Job We'll Ever Have, and one of the things we're going to talk about is taking the long view, because I know you have some very wise advice for parents about that, but before we get into that, just tell me about how you got to be where you are now, a little bit about your journey, anything you'd like to say.

Laura: Sure, well, first of all, like all of us out there who are trying to parent our kids, we believe that's the biggest job we'll ever have, but before I became a parent I learned about the Hyde School when I was a student, and I attended the school. In fact, the rest of my family, my other four sisters and brother, we all attended. When I went to Hyde I really got inspired by the approach, the educational approach, the idea that focusing on your character, and focusing on who you are is the foundation for achievement and the foundation for going out, having the confidence and the leadership to connect to what your deeper purpose is. Even as a student, I remember sitting as a senior, one of the visions I had was to someday come back and take a leadership role at Hyde, so here I am. I love my job. I love getting up every day and working with our students and our families, but I also really love as you and I have traveled around the country consulting and doing programs with other schools and other communities on parenting.

Pam Hardy: Even as a teen, Laura, you knew that this program really, or this process really grabbed you?

Laura: Yes, I did. I think ...

Pam Hardy: That's amazing, I think.

Laura: ... I think when I work with students today, I think there is such a divide between the adult culture and the student culture, and obviously the social media just enhances and increases that divide. A lot of times when we grew up you would, you know, you were in your home and you were feeding off of the family culture. You saw your friends during the day, and you connected with your school, but the family really was the context for principles, and often times now I watch ... It becomes harder. What is the context? The context often times, when we as parents go to bed, or as faculty go to bed, and the youth culture springs up on the internet and on the social media. What I have really valued about Hyde is the commitment to not just have character be a poster or word of the week, an inspirational saying, but character is really a deeper process of having the adults and the students engage in always getting up every day. We call it self-discovery, working on becoming your best self.

Pam Hardy: Even as a teenager you saw that, and now you're passing that on and teaching it to your faculty, and teaching it to parents.

Laura: Absolutely, and seeing, even as a teenager, I saw that this approach, it challenged me not just to look like a winner, but to feel like a winner and to have that self confidence.

Pam Hardy: Uh-huh. That's fantastic. Thank you. Now, here you are. You're executive director of both boarding schools at Hyde, and doing this work full time. It's your calling; I know. It's more than just a career; it's a calling. Most people, I think, know that you've written a book with Malcolm, *The Biggest Job We'll Ever Have*. From that book have come the workshops that you and I have done around the country, and so I guess I'd like to turn now to the subject that I mentioned earlier, taking the long view with parenting. I think it's really hard for parents today with all that's going on, and you mentioned social media, to do that. Tell us a little bit about your experience with that and your advice for parents, please.

Laura: I think most parents that I've talked with over the last even five to ten years, it's very challenging to raise our children in this culture. Back when we were kids growing up, often times you at least had the sense in the neighborhood that there were some parenting norms. There was a feeling that the other parents could, if you were a child and you needed a sort of the kick and the bear hug, I mean, not the physical kick but, obviously, but if you needed that talking to or you needed that hand on the shoulder, that all the parents in the neighborhood had the permission to try to bring out my best. Now, trying to raise our kids in our neighborhoods it's much different. Often times you not only feel alone if you're trying to do the right thing, you're not even sure, number one, what is the right thing. Then, you're not sure you have the support and the backing of that other committed adults in the neighborhood, in the environment. I think, first of all, you know, we have to realize it is challenging. We can't go back to the good ole' days, because certainly not everything in the good ole' days was right. We've come a long way, and we've learned a lot of things, but what we have to do is reconnect the network, and we have to start with our vision for our children.

Rather than get caught up in, and I think this is where you bring this topic up, *The Long View*, rather than get caught up in the problems sometimes that come right up in our ...

the immediate, the short term, and how do I do this, and how do we get out of this situation, to start with the vision. Where do I want this child to be in 20, 30, 40 years? What qualities? What principles? What attributes do I want my daughter or my son to embody, and to get some clarity around that. That's starting the process of taking the long view. Then, remembering that. Sometimes we encourage parents to write it up and find a little, find a way to keep it near you.

I would say, first, is have the courage to always stay in touch with your highest vision, not just vision for your children, your family, but for yourself.

Pam Hardy: Okay, so it's important to have a vision for yourself as well?

Laura: Absolutely.

Pam Hardy: As you're talking, Laura, I'm thinking about particular situations that I'm sure you must have seen hundreds, but let's say I'm a parent of a kid who's just gotten their driver's license, and they've been picked up by my local police, having driven under the influence of alcohol, and so here are the police at my door, and I'm remembering that I heard this podcast with Laura Gauld and she said, "Take the long view," but here's the police at my door, and my kid's just been picked up on a DUI; how do I do that?

Laura: Again, back to that vision about that long view. If one of the things that you want for your children and for your family, is to understand the concept of being a responsible, accountable member of society, and that's a vision, then here's a moment where you might pause and realize that, "Okay, what part of this is my responsibility and what part of this is my child's responsibility? Do I need to step in here and try to minimize this, or make this easier, or do I step back and allow process to happen?" Again, methods don't raise kids; people do, so it's never like, "Here's the foolproof way to take an obstacle like that and handle it perfectly, but at least if you know that one of our visions is to ... It's like we have these children but we're trying to raise them to be healthy, productive, fulfilled adults who understand the concepts of hard work, responsibility, accountability, giving back. Here's a moment where a poor choice has been made. How can I allow this obstacle to ultimately become an opportunity for this person that I care about, and if I jump in and figure it out, which might be taking the shorter view, I might be able to have a little bit of guarantee for the short view, but I might give up the long view.

Pam Hardy: Oh, okay.

Laura: It's important to work the tension between those two.

Pam Hardy: Uh-huh. Okay, and so I let my child experience the consequence of his actions even though it's hard, even though it hurts, even though he's suffering, because I'm looking toward teaching him responsibility as an adult?

Laura: That's right, and again, the tension is important, and it's very important, one of the things I see with a lot of our young people today is some of them don't have enough of a long view in their own life. They are looking at the immediacy of their actions, and so if we can learn how to bet on our long view, we can help them learn that they have a long

view too. Even if in a situation like that, you just step back for a minute and you say, "Okay, well, you know, let me know if you need help." Your child then has to come to you and ask for help. Even that pausing and letting go of the short view of taking care of it gives your child the skill to say, "Wow, this incident is bigger, this incident has more implications for me, maybe I need to step up and handle this and own it."

Pam Hardy: Uh-huh, but what if they don't?

Laura: One thing you know is if they never have to do it, you know they never will, so you're right, and again, there are no guarantees, but if you give them the expectation that they're accountable for the things they do, they work hard, they are accountable for the options they're going to have. They make poor choices, they're accountable for that. It's never too late for all of us as parents, because we all, I mean, I've done this as much as I learned how to work hard in my life, I know there were times as a parent that I gave my kids too much, and I had to pull back, and I had to say, you know, I had to get re-in-touch with the long view and my vision, and I had to say, "You know? I'm sorry. I think really, I owe you an apology because I've done too much for you, and I'm really going to work on letting you take ownership for the decisions that you want to make." We're constantly having to work this tension.

Pam Hardy: Mm hm (affirmative). Now, I know I've heard you say it's like tacking on a sailboat.

Laura: Yeah. Sometimes we learn, but I know as a parent I've often learned by starting out doing too much. Then I've had to learn that that doesn't give my children the opportunity to learn from their own experiences.

Pam Hardy: I'm sure that the earlier we start this with our children the better, right?

Laura: Sure, absolutely, but it's never too late, and because most people, most people that you and I have interacted with over the years, we may have our issues, we may have our challenges, but most people are really great people, and we have character. We've got to get in touch with it. We've got to access it. The great thing about a family is that if a parent makes a shift, and a parent changes, kids feel it. Kids know it, and kids respond, and they get inspired. They may initially say, or get threatened by a mom doing less for her child, and they may get upset, but deep down, when they see that mom take hold of her life, and take hold of her long view, they ultimately get inspired.

Pam Hardy: Mm hm (affirmative). Yes, I've seen that happen. You're right. What do you think most parents today worry about most for their kids?

Laura: Oh, gee, I think we worry about a lot of things. I think we worry about will my child be happy, will my child put their life together, will my child be successful in school, will my child have friends, will my child get into a college that they're proud of, will my child be independent? I mean, a lot of times we get caught up in sort of what we think is this vision of success. We don't often worry about will my child have enough failure, will my child have enough struggle, will my child deal with rejection, will my child learn how to take risks and fall flat on their face, but ultimately, if you think about that second category, that's how our children build up the bank account of resiliency, and the grit,

and the risk taking, and the wisdom, and the maturity, and to be able to say, "I can go after that even if it reaches beyond my grasp," or the self worth to be able to say, "I am worthy to grab that brass ring. I am worthy to go after this."

Pam Hardy: That's a great shift in thinking, the way you just reversed it. You know? Will my child take a risk? Will they fall on their face?

Laura: Yeah, will they experience rejection? Will they experience failure? Will they experience struggle?

Pam Hardy: Yeah, we don't go into parenting like that. Maybe that's your next book, Laura. Okay, well, I mentioned in the intro that we might talk about the fundamentals, but I think that could be another whole podcast if you would join us again?

Laura: Sure, I'd love to.

Pam Hardy: Your five fundamentals of parenting could be a next podcast.

Laura: Sure.

Pam Hardy: Are there any words of wisdom that you'd like to leave with our listeners?

Laura: Think about what we want for our children, embrace it for ourselves, and if we want our children to understand a vision, and to have the courage to fight through the daily struggles that get us there, then embrace it ourselves, and never be afraid of a high vision. It's not where you ... it's not ultimately whether you fulfill that exact vision, but if we commit to a high vision for ourselves, for our children, for our families, then that creates a powerful energy. It creates a wake that kind of raises us all up in the family, so I would just encourage all of us to embrace that.

Pam Hardy: Laura, thank you very much. I'm very excited about having this as our kickoff podcast, and thank you for your time.

Laura: Thank you, Pam.

Pam Hardy: Wow, I could have talked to Laura for a lot longer, and I hope we do get her back to talk about the five fundamentals of parenting, but in this podcast there were three takeaways, definitely, for me. One was methods don't raise kids; people do. What we want for our children, we need to embrace that ourselves, and that we should never be afraid of a high vision. Not only does that serve us in our lives, it serves our kids and our families. Thanks for joining us.