

Ep. 18: Girls Need Trusted Adults

[00:00:00] **Brooklyn Raney:** My name is Brooklyn Raney. I am an educator, a camp director, and a mother, and I am on a mission to ensure that every child on this planet has a trained, committed, motivated, trusted adult.

[00:00:18] **Brooklyn Raney:** This mission began in an auditorium. As an educator, I heard prevention talk after prevention talk, and whether it was suicide prevention or substance abuse prevention, they all ended exactly the same way. If you have a worry, a fear, a concern, or a question, seek out a trusted adult, this is when I began to ask myself, do the young people in our care see us as trusted adults and do we see ourselves as trusted adults?

[00:00:46] **Trudy Hall:** The headlines weren't great even before the pandemic. The diagnosis of depression in adolescents increased by 63% in the last decade. Multiple studies have shown an increased link between excessive social media use and increased anxiety, loneliness and worse in pre-teens and teens. Incidents of bullying are on the rise and that can lead to feelings of rejection, exclusion and isolation.

[00:01:11] **Trudy Hall:** So we wonder: Do our girls have the adult support they need in these challenging times? Are we or are the teachers and other adults in our daughters' lives showing up in the right ways? Can our daughters identify a trusted adult in their life, one to whom they go when they need a good ear, one who has proper boundaries, one who they know cares about them?

[00:01:28] **Trudy Hall:** Turns out it is a question every parent should be asking, as statistics tell us that—on average—only 40% of students say they can name a trusted adult at school. Yet, the research also says a child who can name one trusted adult inside their home as well as at least one trusted adult outside their home are less likely to bully or be bullied,

[00:01:54] **Trudy Hall:** suffer from depression or abuse substances. And, even better, they are more likely to be resilient, stay calm in the face of challenges, practice better-coping skills and be more involved in school and school activities. Just what is a trusted adult and how does one become one?

[00:02:14] **Voice note:** I think it's important to have a trusted adult besides my parents, because my parents, like they wanna help me and they don't want me to like be hurting, but my trusted adult can like understand that kind of pain and not try and like fix it all in one day. Like kind of like throughout the course of time.

[00:02:50] **voice note:** I personally haven't found an adult who I can trust, but I feel like a person to trust an adult is someone you can see often and someone who is ready to talk to you and ready to give advice and ready to listen.

[00:03:12] **voice note:** This person that I trust with [00:03:00] sharing my information with really listens to me and offers me advice and knows when to step in and to just sit there and let me tell them what I need to say. And that's just really important to me because sometimes I need help and sometimes I just need an ear for someone just to listen.

[00:03:20] **Trudy Hall:** I am Trudy Hall, your host on this episode of On Educating Girls, a podcast produced by the International Coalition of Girls Schools and today we will chat with someone who knows the answers to those questions.

[00:03:31] **Trudy Hall:** My guest today is Brooklyn Raney, whose voice you heard just a moment ago as she told us about her life's work: ensuring every child on the planet has a trained, committed and motivated trusted adult. Brook is the author of One Trusted Adult: How to Build Strong Connections and Healthy Boundaries with Young People, and the founder of an organization of the same name that trains educators, parents and student leaders.

[00:03:57] **Trudy Hall:** Brook, an experienced teacher, coach, camp counselor, and school administrator has researched and created practices that enhance the ability of adults to "show up" as a trusted adult in the life of a girl. Now an experienced practitioner in this work, she takes her mission nationally and internationally, partnering with both adults and students to empower them to effectively engage in healthy ways.

[00:04:23] **Trudy Hall:** Trust me on this—this is one of those podcasts that both you and your daughter ought to listen to. Brook, it is such a privilege to connect with you and be a part of your important mission. So let's dive right in.

[00:04:38] **Brooklyn Raney:** Thrilled to be here, Trudy. Thank you.

[00:04:39] **Trudy Hall:** As the founder of one Trusted Adult, you're very clear about your mission to ensure that every child on the planet has a trained, trusted, and motivated adult. Let's unpack that a little bit as we begin our conversation. So first, tell us what inspired you. Why is this your life work?

[00:04:58] **Brooklyn Raney:** I personally grew [00:05:00] up with many trusted adults in my corner. And honestly, I think I took that for granted, um, and maybe still do. I grew up in a small town in Ontario, and one block one way was a set of grandparents, one block. The other way was another set of grandparents. I had

aunts, uncles, coaches, and teachers. Many people invested in my well-being, in my goals, and in my success. And when I became an educator it became very clear to me right away that that was not the case for every child. And what I know from the research is that young people who can name a trusted adult, at least one, I always say at least my book is called One Trusted Adult, but only because the word, at least it did not fit on the top of the cover.

[00:05:45] **Brooklyn Raney:** Uh, what's best for young people is having a corner full of trained, trusted adults in their corner, supporting them in what they define as success and their personal goals. Uh, we see that young people are less likely to bully or be bullied. [00:06:00] They're less likely to abuse substances, they're less likely to suffer from depression, and they're more likely to be able to turn toxic stress into tolerable stress. Uh, face challenges. Invest in their personal well-being, emotional well-being, and physical well-being, and be available for learning if they can name at least one and they do far better when they can name more. So when I recognize that I had grown up relationally rich and there were not, not every young person could say the same.

[00:06:33] **Brooklyn Raney:** I really dug in on advisory and working as an educator, how can I improve all relationships, adults, any adults on our campus with the young people in our care? And I work in high school specifically, and there was one month where we had every prevention program you could imagine from substance abuse prevention to suicide prevention.

[00:06:56] **Brooklyn Raney:** And every single program said the best protective factor for a young [00:07:00] person is ensuring that they have a trusted adult. And to me, in that moment when I looked around the auditorium, I asked myself, do the young people in our care see us, the adults in this room as the trusted adult, these prevention programs are advertising us to be? And almost more importantly, do we the adults step out of our car in the morning, walk into schools and say, I'm here to trusted adult and teach chemistry or, and teach theatre in my case? Um, and I knew there was a gap there and I am very interested still that sort of set me on this path and on this mission, and I'm looking to close that gap.

[00:07:34] **Trudy Hall:** So if I'm a parent and I'm listening in right now, I'm thinking to myself, but my daughter talks to me. Um, why is it important for them to have to know that there are other trusted adults in their daughters' lives?

[00:07:46] **Brooklyn Raney:** 100% parents are the primary trusted adults in young people's lives. The at-home guardians, sometimes its parents, sometimes its grandparents and beyond. Those are the key trusted adults in a child's life.

[00:07:59] **Brooklyn Raney:** [00:08:00] I come in it from a school place because that is where young people are spending a lot of time. They are growing there, developing there. They're being challenged there. They're adopting beliefs there and having adults at school during those hours that they can turn to that are, that know them, that value them is really key to their sense of belonging and connectedness, which ties to their growth and development. And again, what's best is those parents and guardians are in partnership with the at-school adults, and we're all on the same page working for the benefit of the child.

[00:08:34] **Trudy Hall:** When I've, uh, spoken to you before and when I've read your work, um, I know that you have some great language that you use and so I think it'd be great for parents to hear the ways in which you talk, cause I think that'll offer them some comfort as well. So, in your view, what is a trusted adult?

[00:08:50] **Brooklyn Raney:** Well, the beauty of all of this is I started out with just sort of my own personal opinions, my own experience, and just chatting with my students to understand what they're looking for, what [00:09:00] they're seeking, what they're in need of support, in what areas. And then I was able to actually launch into doing formal interviews.

[00:09:07] **Brooklyn Raney:** So what I can actually share with you now is what has emerged out of hundreds of interviews with young people today but also with adults speaking about the trusted adults who showed up for them when they were younger. And what has emerged from that data is three critical qualities of trust. It's accessible, bounded, and caring.

[00:09:27] **Brooklyn Raney:** And when I present and when we share it in our workshops, we always do it in three overlapping circles. Accessibility, overlapping with boundaries, and boundaries overlapping with care. Um, accessible. We mean you are available. You are approachable. You are actually interested in creating a connection, and you are, you are showing that you are advertising that. Bounded means we have a strong understanding of the roles of the relationship that, uh, I respect and understand your, uh, values, your [00:10:00] opinions, your physical body.

[00:10:01] **Brooklyn Raney:** I, um, am adhering to both the professional and the emotional at the same. As, and then care, we define as a deep investment and interest in the wellbeing of another. And it's in the overlap of those qualities where not only trust is built, but that is our greatest hope to beat burnout, which I know is a hot, hot, hot topic in, uh, education and all youth-serving professionals.

[00:10:27] **Brooklyn Raney:** In how we can do this work and do it for the long haul. And again, what emerged from all this data accessible, bounded caring, they

showed up as the ABCs, which was just so convenient for a, a drifty person like me who forget a lot of things. Uh, but the ABCs is the language that we use to describe to youth and to adults.

[00:10:45] **Trudy Hall:** I love that. So easy. So, um, I know that you spend countless hours, uh, training adults. Um, this is the work that you do well, and while we are not gonna be able to do that training justice in this short period of time. Could you just maybe [00:11:00] frame some of the critical elements that you offer up as part of the training?

[00:11:04] **Brooklyn Raney:** I think if I were to do a very condensed version and give you sort of the tip of the iceberg that comes with this training, well, one, I'd say I think it's important even to know that we can train to be the best-trusted adults for young people. That it's possible to have conversations and learn strategies and skills for showing up in the best way possible.

[00:11:23] **Brooklyn Raney:** I love my conversation specifically with educators who've been in it for 20, 30 years who come to this training and say, you know what? That's something someone did for me as a young person, but I had not thought about implementing it in my history classroom or as the coach of the softball team. And so a lot of it is a reminder, reconnection with positive practices and new evidence-based research that shows us the best possible ways for connecting with youth.

[00:11:51] **Brooklyn Raney:** But if I were to go specifically to one portion of our training, I would go to Universal Youth needs. Um, I think this applies to parents, [00:12:00] educators, coaches, aunts, uncles, you name it. And that is what we call the basics. Belonging in membership, ability to contribute safety and structure, independence and control, competence and mastery, and self-awareness and connection.

[00:12:14] **Brooklyn Raney:** Those basics, if we can in every moment with a young person, ask ourselves, what am I doing to help a young person get their need met when they're in the community or in space with me? And we can help them get their needs met in healthy ways. That means we're going to prevent them from seeking to get their needs met in unhealthy ways.

[00:12:33] **Brooklyn Raney:** And so I offer the basics, that language, and there's a whole deep dive into every single one of those and specific practices we can use. Um, but those are the - Young people are going to seek to get their needs met with or without us. So we as trusted adults in any area in their life can set up spaces where they have the opportunity to get it met in a healthy way, it's our greatest opportunity to build trust and also prevent some of the things we're most worried about.

[00:12:57] **Trudy Hall:** Well, it goes without saying that if you came up with the
[00:13:00] ABCs, you would also come up with the basics, right? Um, so as -

[00:13:03] **Brooklyn Raney:** I need all the acronyms, Trudy. I need all the acronyms to keep me straight.

[00:13:07] **Trudy Hall:** So, um, you make this sound so natural. Why is it hard for us as adults to get this right sometimes? What, where do we stumble? What are our roadblocks?

[00:13:19] **Brooklyn Raney:** That's an interesting one. I think two ways I would answer that question. The first sort of pushback I sometimes get in training is, this is just one more thing on my plate. This is just one more thing that I need to do.

[00:13:33] **Brooklyn Raney:** I already have this enormous job. And that is absolutely true for educators and for parents. The job is enormous. Uh, there is no finish line to the job. It is ongoing and in education at least, it starts over again every single year at ground zero. So one of the obstacles is thinking of this work as one more thing on my plate.

[00:13:55] **Brooklyn Raney:** And I had an amazing social studies teacher come up to me after [00:14:00] a training and say, I, I can't, you know, this is, I teach, my job is to teach, I I can't do this too. And I said, will you give it a shot? Learn, you know, give me, I'll give you three things, like focus on these basics, try these three strategies and let's check back in a couple of months.

[00:14:15] **Brooklyn Raney:** And he said to me, Brooklyn, this is not one more thing on my plate. It actually is the plate. Starting with relationships and connections has made everything easier. And so I think one obstacle is a mindset shift for all of us in that the full focus on connection and relationship is the thing that can hold all the other things and will make all the other things easier.

[00:14:40] **Brooklyn Raney:** The other is we inadvertently rob young people of opportunities to get their needs met while seeking to get our own needs met by using the young people. So I'll give you, I'll give you a great example. I heard recently. A young woman had gotten a, a guitar stand. She's at an all-girls boarding
[00:15:00] school and she got a new guitar stand in the mail.

[00:15:02] **Brooklyn Raney:** This huge box came in and she had friends help her get it back to the dorm, and she started putting it together in the lounge and the pieces were everywhere. And then she had to go to dinner, to dinner, check-in, and she ran into the dorm parent. A wonderful woman who was going to be there, uh, on duty that night.

[00:15:20] **Brooklyn Raney:** And so she said to her, my stuff's all over the lounge. Um, would you be willing to help me put this guitar? I really, I know I can do it, but can you help me with a couple of pieces later? I can't figure out this one thing. Will you be there? Blah, blah, blah. And the dorm parent says, yes, absolutely. Happy to help you.

[00:15:40] **Brooklyn Raney:** By the time the girl came back from dinner, cuz she hung out with friends and the duty person had to get back to duty. And she thought, oh, I'll just help her. I'll, I'll put it, I'll start putting it together. Well, the adult put, the whole guitar stand together. And so when the young person came back to the lounge and the, the adult thought, I'm doing [00:16:00] such a nice thing, right?

[00:16:01] **Brooklyn Raney:** I'm helping. And she did extra work above and beyond to help the girl and put it together. The young woman walked in and said, oh, you did it already? And she said, thanks. And she took the guitar stand and she went to her room and that adult told me. She's like, I did not realize it at the moment, but I, I missed a huge opportunity.

[00:16:23] **Brooklyn Raney:** One, I think she wanted to spend time with me, which how often can we say teenagers are, are craving to spend time with that adult? And it was the perfect opportunity for her to feel that sense of competence and mastery by completing it with just a little bit of support from me on the side. And so I think one of those obstacles you mention, is that we rush to the rescue.

[00:16:42] **Brooklyn Raney:** We wanna save. We wanna feel good about the work that we are doing. But actually a lot of the good work we do as trusted adults is completely invisible. It's about asking good questions, not having great answers. It's about setting up an opportunity for young people to shine and for us to move back into the background and [00:17:00] let them be centre stage. So that's what I would offer, I think, as a big obstacle.

[00:17:04] **Trudy Hall:** I really, um, like the example that you gave us because I think it demonstrates for me possibly another challenge is, which as adults we're busy. We're just moving fast. If I can get this one thing off my to-do list, I'm gonna do it. And so that extra step of needing to stop and take a breath and say, wait a second, what did she just ask for?

[00:17:23] **Trudy Hall:** Um, is a pretty important reminder to all of us I think. So. So having said that, um, in your talks, um, I've heard you mention the four modes or types of support that, uh, children need from the adults in their lives. And I like this one. I know it's another acronym for you in some respects, but I like this one because I think you call them the four Cs. Can you walk us through these four Cs?

[00:17:46] **Brooklyn Raney:** Absolutely. So we actually created a quiz that people can take through our training that shows you a percentage in which way you lean. And those four Cs are as a cheerleader, a challenger, a [00:18:00] comforter, and a coach. So cheerleaders, as you can imagine, they win or you know, they express their, uh, care and they build connection through positivity and praise.

[00:18:10] **Brooklyn Raney:** Um, challengers express that care by saying like, I believe you can do more. I believe you can do better. It's an investment. Young people don't always see that challenging as care, but that's part of the project here. Comforters express that care through listening, quiet space, you know, sitting next to. And coach, uh, expressed their care through feedback, through goal setting, really future-focused, um, moving you towards what you are trying to achieve.

[00:18:39] **Brooklyn Raney:** The beauty is that young people need all four. They absolutely need all four, and we can be all of those to we, we can pull each lever. I like to think of it as I'm trying to connect with a young person. Either they're struggling or they're dreaming. It doesn't matter like where they are, we're just trying to move them forward.[00:19:00]

[00:19:00] **Brooklyn Raney:** And I might try cheerleader to start and there's not the response that I was hoping for. So I try a little challenger. I try a little comforter, I try a little coach. But we've gotta be savvy, trusted adults, and to know our options and to know some language to engage in these different ways. The important, an important note is that there's also a shadow side to each of these.

[00:19:20] **Brooklyn Raney:** If we spend too much time in cheerleading mode, we can actually have a reverse effect. We can over-celebrate this, is that you know, everyone gets a trophy mentality that people push back on. If we over-comfort, we can enable, if we, uh, over-coach, we can be so future-focused. We forget to live in the moment.

[00:19:38] **Brooklyn Raney:** So the important piece here is just a constant assessment. Am I meeting that young person where they are? Am I providing a mode that's moving us forward? And language, language, language, language, it's shared language with youth and with each other.

[00:19:53] **Trudy Hall:** Is the student aware of the mode you're in or are you aware of the mode and you're not sharing it? So I'd love to have, love to hear a [00:20:00] story about, okay, who, who knows this shared language and how do you use it?

[00:20:03] **Brooklyn Raney:** We at OTA, we are all about using any adult-facing language we use is the exact same language we would use with youth. The story I'll

share is I had this partnership with the school counselor and we shared this language and it was always like, Hey, so-and-so student is in my office.

[00:20:21] **Brooklyn Raney:** I had to play Challenger today because of, you know, an issue in, in the dorm. Would you swing by and do some cheerleading? Right. Or she might, uh, email me and say, in comforting mode, but need to get a class A student back to class. I've gained some ground comforting, but now they need a little coaching.

[00:20:40] **Brooklyn Raney:** And so what it helped was it didn't make us break mode. It wasn't about 'good cop, bad cop'. It's so much more than that. And it's, again, it's helping each other show up to support that child with a group of parents, uh, a pair of parents. I was the advisor for a young woman who was really struggling with the college [00:21:00] process.

[00:21:01] **Brooklyn Raney:** Um, just pushing back, uh, ignoring, putting her head in the sand, like really not wanting to go there. There were a lot of nerves and anxiousness around the process, and I had a great relationship with the parent, and it was this language that helped us get there because if I had to challenge her because we were up against a deadline and she was gonna miss something, I could say to the parents, I was all challenging with your child today.

[00:21:26] **Brooklyn Raney:** I think she's gonna need some comforting when you talk to her later so that we weren't double downing on the challenging and she was getting it from every angle, but we could sort of spread out and make sure she had all four Cs in her corner from different adults that she trusted.

[00:21:41] **Trudy Hall:** Um, I like those examples cuz it tells me that a parent could also do that with even surround sound in the home setting, whether it's with grandma or aunty or someone else, or even big sister to say, I've, I've been the challenger, you need to be the coach. And they're, and they're all empowering words as well, which I, I love as well.

[00:21:58] **Voice Note:** I can't think of a [00:22:00] trusted adult that I have found yet, but I think that I could, like, they'd be someone that I could go to easily and be able to understand me to a certain level where it's not too like pushy or like hard for them to understand, but it's a good like level for both of us.

[00:22:25] **Voice note:** When I go to someone for advice, sometimes it can be a little personal and I don't always wanna share that with my parents. And to have someone who's not as close to me then it easier for me to share that information and get a thoughtful response back.

[00:22:55] **Brooklyn Raney:** There was a time when I went to someone for help and I just had like something that kept reoccurring to me and I really needed some help with it, and I went to this person and they said, Hey, let's talk about it. Let's work through it. We don't have to figure it out today. We don't have to figure out [00:23:00] tomorrow, but we can work on it together so that we can make sure that it goes the way you want it to.

[00:23:05] **Trudy Hall:** But there's another half of this critical partnership and that's the girls who are looking for a trusted adult. I talked to some recently and they identified, and this was interesting to me cause it bears out in your research, they identified that they didn't have one, but they thought it would be a nice thing and they could articulate why it was nice. So I was intrigued that they didn't have one. So how do we get girls to search out or seek out a trusted adult?

[00:23:31] **Brooklyn Raney:** It's really interesting you say that because our research is showing that about 40% of students, adolescents, middle school and high school will say that they can name a trusted adult at school. Um, and it, the higher number than that will say that they can name a trusted adult in general.

[00:23:47] **Brooklyn Raney:** Um, I have questions on whether it's an actual relational gap or if it's a language gap. So one school I was working with the principal said, "How could this be? We have so much of an investment in advisory and social-emotional learning and all the programs that we offer. How could it be that only 40% of our students are saying that they have a trusted adult at school?"

[00:24:12] **Brooklyn Raney:** This doesn't make sense. And my question was, you know, well first I prompted her, just wander around, just chat. Ask, ask your students. And she came back and she said, Brook, they don't know what a trusted adult is. They don't know what we mean by that term. And so they, they pulled back and said, we wanna do some really basic conversations about trust, about care, about mentorship, about why you would wanna build a network of people in your corner to support you in your goals.

[00:24:42] **Brooklyn Raney:** And we've now created, uh, a video that helps young people know that their responsibility is to come 50% of the way. And we've gotta tell students specifically that the adults can only go 50% of the way, whether that's your parents, your coaches, they can invest in you that much and then your job is to come the other [00:25:00] 50% of the way.

[00:25:01] **Brooklyn Raney:** So you've gotta determine what trust means to you, um, what you need, what you want for support, and build those supports in before you actually need them because when you are desperately in need, you're not gonna

be able to find them. But if you've invested in the relationships ahead of time, then they're there.

[00:25:17] **Brooklyn Raney:** And I think there's a lot of good conversation we can have in our advisory programs, after-school programs, dorms about what that means. What all of those programs are actually for?

[00:25:26] **Trudy Hall:** Well, and a critical element that you just mentioned is that whole notion of proactivity. Um, I think oftentimes, uh, the generation that we're raising wants help and they want it now and in life as we all know, if you invest in relationships along the way, when you need that help, it's more readily available to you. Great life lessons in the middle of these conversations as well. So for the parents who are listening, um, can you, can you offer up a sense of when girls most need a trusted adult? Are there certain critical development periods where you would say absolutely touch [00:26:00] base with your child, make sure she's got a trusted adult?

[00:26:02] **Brooklyn Raney:** From beginning to end? I think that we need them. I still today surround myself with many trusted adults. I need them. Um, what we are finding in our research is that actually a lot of adolescents will name elementary educators as their trusted adults still to this day, even if they're not seeing them as regularly. Um, what this tells me is that those early educators are crucial to the idea in a young person that they would choose to trust someone outside the home.

[00:26:34] **Brooklyn Raney:** That first experience with the daycare instructor or the kindergarten teacher, uh, the babysitter, the nanny, the grandparents, people outside the home, that's when you begin considering the thought that I would trust and care and be cared for about another adult outside of my at-home guardians or parents.

[00:26:53] **Brooklyn Raney:** So those initial relationships are really important to establish how a young person, young [00:27:00] woman, uh, interacts with school and school people for the rest of her life. We see that the, you know, older, they get the higher stakes with the things I named earlier that we worry about most. Um, with mental health issues and physical health issues, all of the concerns and, and the traps and the obstacles that young people will inevitably face. Definitely having more trusted adults in their corner at that time will be crucial to their, to their safety.

[00:27:27] **Trudy Hall:** So, I know you're a parent, um, as well, um, as you put your parent hat squarely on, uh, what do you really want parents to know about being a trusted adult, perhaps to someone else's child or even their own child?

[00:27:40] **Brooklyn Raney:** What we're seeing is that youth today are experiencing less cross-generational relationships than ever before. So we are no longer living in

cross, as many of us living in cross-generational homes with many, um, grandparents and aunts and uncles, parents and children and cousins in the home, and [00:28:00] we're spreading out.

[00:28:01] **Brooklyn Raney:** We may be miles apart, states apart, countries apart from family. Um, yes, technology. Some, it does create some connection. However, it does draw a distance and we're isolating more, and maybe not even as connected to our neighbours, um, or our, the people we'll meet at school. It is so crucial that young people have adults outside the home to turn to whom you trust as well.

[00:28:28] **Brooklyn Raney:** This isn't just about the young people trusting them, but it is about the parents and guardians, uh, encouraging these relationships and cultivating a culture of that sense of trust with others, but they've got to be a part of it. I recall you said me as a parent, so when my son was 16 and learning to drive, I was taking him on a, on out, on his, uh, getting his hours in for his permit.

[00:28:55] **Brooklyn Raney:** And he was in a funk. He was in an absolute funk. And, you [00:29:00] know, there was an appearance thing and there things weren't going right at school, things weren't going right at football. And of course, I say the mom thing, like, you're so handsome, what are you talking about? And he's like, you have to say that because you're my mother.

[00:29:12] **Brooklyn Raney:** And he was just in this funk and there was nothing I could say. I wanted to make all the food and the cookies and take him to the movies, you know, I wanted to fix it, fix it, fix it. Cuz I hated seeing my child hurting. And I would've spent days and pulled my hair out and I lost sleep over it. And then we pull into a gas station and he gets out and I'm just sitting in the front seat.

[00:29:34] **Brooklyn Raney:** My windows are down a little bit and from across the parking lot somebody yells his name and this man who I've never actually seen before, comes running over and my son lights up. And I hear this man say they worked at a summer job together. He had hired my son to work at this summer job and he said, man, we miss you.

[00:29:53] **Brooklyn Raney:** Your playlist was always on fire. Like, we miss your humor. And he told my son all of these [00:30:00] things that he missed about him. It was a four-minute interaction. Four-minute interaction. My son gets back in the car and he is a different human being. So as the parent, I would've spent days. I would've looked up all the research.

[00:30:14] **Brooklyn Raney:** What am I doing wrong? This is all my fault. How do I help him? When it took another adult, seeing him, knowing him, valuing him. Making him feel like he contributed, that he offered something that absolutely changed the

course. I would say of his month. He was different. Um, and so that's where that little moment is what tells me this is so important and that even the perfect parent cannot do it alone.

[00:30:38] **Brooklyn Raney:** Even the perfect parent cannot do it alone. This is teamwork. Raising adolescence is teamwork.

[00:30:44] **Trudy Hall:** Well, and another neat thing about that story is, and it didn't take hours and hours, it took four minutes. No, that's all it took. Four minutes. You know, it's, and that's what we know about, um, all teenagers, they're quixotic.

[00:30:54] **Trudy Hall:** Um, and help can come in small doses. Yep. And can be very lasting. So [00:31:00] you and I can basically agree on the fact that in the world in which we live, it's never been. More important to surround a young person with trusted adults. In fact, we didn't even talk about the impact of social media on this, and we could go down another rabbit hole and talk about that because I think that's an isolating factor as well in the lives of students.

[00:31:19] **Trudy Hall:** So if you think about leaving our listeners with some things that, um, catchphrases if you will, or immediate suggestions, some strategies, things that will make it easy for them to grab onto a piece of this conversation and carry it forward with their own daughter.

[00:31:34] **Brooklyn Raney:** I would say there are four things. Nope, I'm gonna say five things. I'm always adding to the list. , this conversation has brought up so much for me, Trudy. Um, one is tell them about your trusted adults. Tell them about coaches and aunts and uncles who showed up for you because the way you tell those stories, especially if you use terms like accessibility and boundaries and care, you are teaching about trust [00:32:00] and you're teaching about possibility through those stories.

[00:32:03] **Brooklyn Raney:** The second is, when you fill out paperwork, whether it be for camp or a sport or school, and you're writing down the emergency contacts, invite your child to have a say in who those people are and or explain why you're writing down the people that you're writing down. That is another beautiful, natural way to signal the importance of trusted people, and trusted adults in their lives.

[00:32:29] **Brooklyn Raney:** They're going to liberate from us. They're like a part of their development is, is liberation from us and as the parents of our opinion, of the rules of our home, they're either going to turn, like you said, to social media or somewhere to be validated and affirmed. What we hope is we've put other adults in their life that they'll turn to those adults when it's time for them to liberate from us, that they'll turn to those other adults that you've invested in from the beginning.

[00:32:55] **Brooklyn Raney:** The third is to talk about boundaries. The boundaries of the [00:33:00] at-home adults are different than the boundaries of the at-school adults. Um, again, this is in our training, there's so much more to say here, um, but at school, they're mandated reporters. Um, they're not therapists. Their interactions can be therapeutic.

[00:33:15] **Brooklyn Raney:** Uh, it's not about pathology. It's gotta be about possibility. There's a real difference in the way people need to show up for other people's children versus the way they show up for their own children. So have conversations about boundaries and why family life is different from school life. Uh, fourth, talk to your schools about advisory programs.

[00:33:35] **Brooklyn Raney:** We are huge on pushing tech-free advisory. We hear from adolescents, girls specifically, they wanna sit in circles, they wanna play games, and they wanna engage with one another. They don't wanna be on that iPad or that tablet. All day long, especially in an advisory. Let go of the tech for a little bit, engage in conversations, keep it on leadership skills and team building skills, and make it about connection.

[00:33:59] **Brooklyn Raney:** And then the [00:34:00] fifth, we always say to be who you need it. We are hearing from young people that many times the trusted adults in their lives are the parents of their friends. I think that's a lot of your listeners, right? Those parents. So you think about showing up for your own children, but you are likely to play a very big role in the lives of your children's friends.

[00:34:19] **Brooklyn Raney:** So we always say, be who you needed. Think about what was it that you needed when you were 12, when you were 16, when you were 18, and, be that person.

[00:34:28] **Trudy Hall:** Well, you actually took us full circle, um, with that last point, because you remember when we started to talk about some of the hurdles, one of the things you suggested was essentially that they, they know this, adults know this and they, they, to discover it in themselves.

[00:34:42] **Trudy Hall:** They actually just think back to who was the trusted adult. In their lives because thank goodness so many of us have a trusted adult. Um, and I do. I think the work that you're doing is really critical work. I love the way you've broken it down for us and created some ABCs and some basics and some roles.

[00:34:58] **Trudy Hall:** I, I think we can all agree that if I [00:35:00] can hold onto that language and language that is shareable with my daughter. This is not confidential stuff. This is straightforward, authentic, conversational skills. So thanks very much for

unpacking. Unpacking it, Brooke. I appreciate it. I knew I would love this conversation and it was terrific.

[00:35:15] **Trudy Hall:** You take care now and go out and go out and be, go out and be who you needed when you were a young person.

Brooklyn Raney: Thank you, Trudy.

Trudy Hall: This has been On Educating Girls, a podcast produced by the International Coalition of Girls Schools to address real issues that impact the lives of girls we know. The girl's voices you heard come from students at Seattle Girls School in Seattle, Washington.

[00:35:35] **Trudy Hall:** As always, we welcome your thoughts, so please send comments and questions to podcast@girlsschools.org and join us next time as we share insights and resources. Thanks for listening; it really is important to the girls in your lives that you do!