

And here's the exciting news: it's actually not rocket science. Open communication, mutual respect, kindness, patience — we can practice these things every day.

And while practice will definitely make you better, I have to promise you it's also not going to make you perfect. I do this for a living and every day I think and talk about healthy relationships, and still I do unhealthy things.

Just the other day as I was trying to shuttle my four kids out the door amidst quarreling, squabbling and complaints about breakfast, I completely lost it. With an intentionally angry edge, I screamed, "Everybody just shut up and do what I say! You are the worst! I am going to take away screen time and dessert and anything else you could possibly ever enjoy in life!"

Anybody been there? Volatility, belittling.

My oldest son turned around and looked at me, and said, "Mom, that's not love."

For a minute, I really wanted to kill him for calling me out. Trust me.

But then I gathered myself and I thought, you know what, I'm actually proud. I'm proud that he has a language to make me pause. I want all of my kids to understand what the bar should be for how they're treated and to have a language and a voice to use when that bar is not met versus just accepting it.

For too long, we've treated relationships as a soft topic, when relationship skills are one of the most important and hard to build things in life. Not only can understanding unhealthy signs help you avoid the rabbit hole that leads to unhealthy love, but understanding and practicing the art of being



The Difference Between Healthy and Unhealthy Love: Katie Hood (Transcript) | 2

healthy can improve nearly every aspect of your life.

I'm completely convinced that while love is an instinct and an emotion, the ability to love better is a skill we can all build and improve on over time.

ALSO READ: Sandra Chapman on Make Your Brain Smarter: It's Not What You Think at TEDxRockCreekPark (Transcript)

Thank you.

For Further Reading:

[Why We Love, Why We Cheat: Helen Fisher \(Transcript\)](#)

[Full Transcript: Esther Perel on Modern Love and Relationships at SXSW 2018](#)

[How To Tell If Someone Truly Loves You: Femi Ogunjinmi \(Transcript\)](#)

[Transcript: How Love Turns Pain into Purpose by Steven Hayes](#)

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