



The OPEN DOOR To HELP

By Jamie Edelbrock

Kids come with a full spectrum of emotions, some of which are too big to keep inside. Each child processes their feelings differently but learning to deal with them is an important part of growing up.

Studies show one in six kids between the ages of two-and eight-years-old have a mental, behavioral, or developmental disorder. Navigating this world as a parent can be scary; experiencing this as a young child can be even scarier.

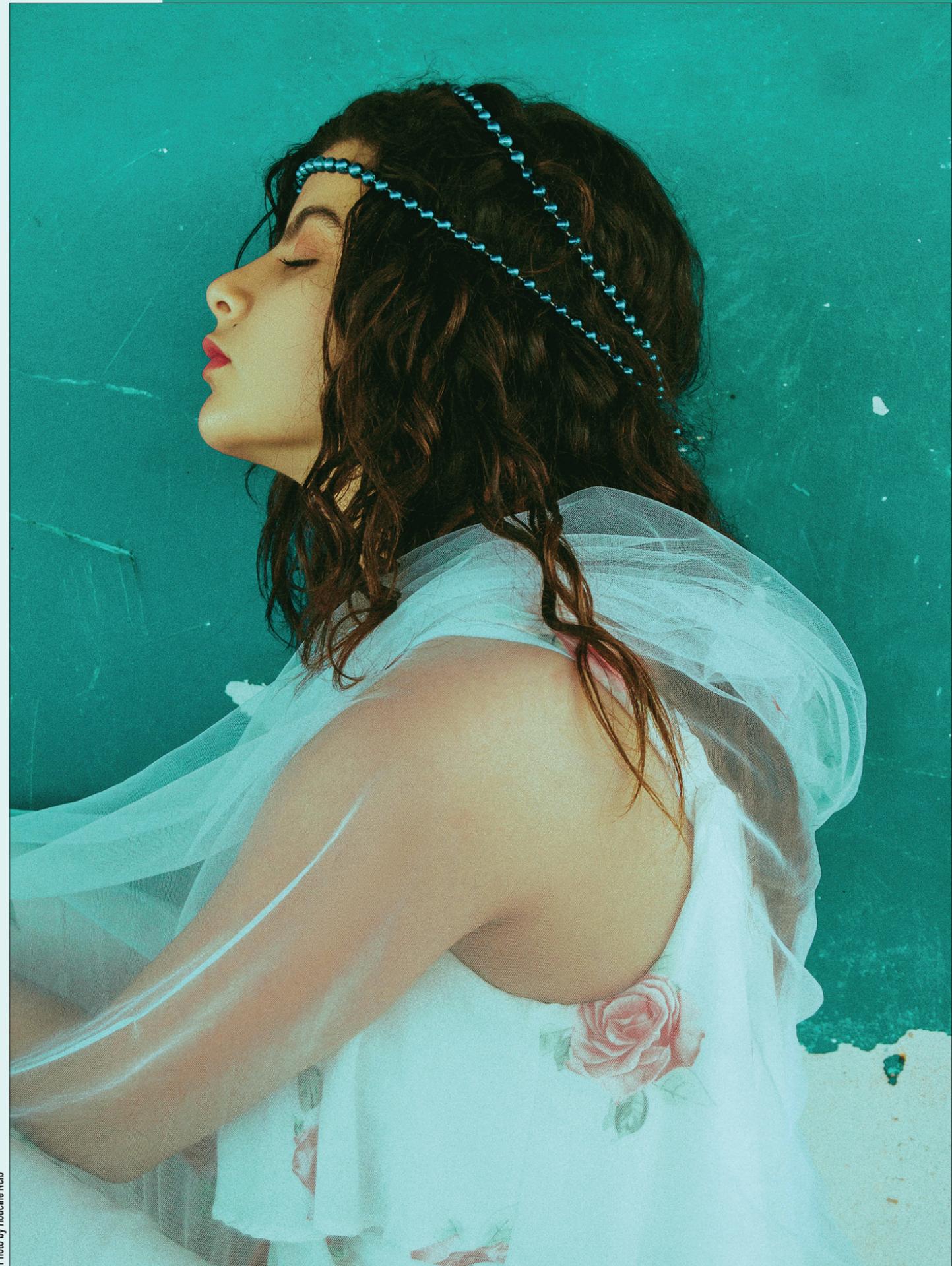
Tangled Up lessens the fear of the unknown and shines a positive, peaceful light on therapy and mental health. It colorfully shows how the beautiful threads of us can become tangled, and how counselors and therapists are here to help us twirl bravely through life. To say the past year has been turbulent would be an understatement. I feel like it's one bad thing after the next, and despite best efforts, nothing seems to make it stop.

It reminds me of when I came home from church one day to water spilling out of our ceiling onto our kitchen table. Not only was the water ruining the ceiling, but it was also destroying our mail, iPads, and school projects. We rushed to turn off the water, get towels, buckets, and anything to stop the madness. Unfortunately, nothing helped. The water kept coming. There was so much that it somehow reached the smoke detector wires and caused each one to go off. At this point, water

was falling, alarms were going off, our kids were crying, and our dogs were barking. It was madness. Since my husband was deployed at the time, I called every friend I knew to help, but no one was home. I felt helpless and completely out of control. I'm not sure how, but despite the chaos, I heard the doorbell. I was utterly embarrassed to open the door with my house in such disarray, but when I finally opened the door, I was filled with relief. It was a rescuer, a firefighter.

I didn't call 911, I'm not sure who did, but I was so thankful he was there. With tears in my eyes, the only words that came out of my mouth were, "I don't know how to make it stop." He asked if he could go in, and within minutes he and his coworkers helped calm the chaos. The firefighters didn't solve every little thing. Our ceiling and pipes still needed to be fixed, and it took time. Several things needed to be repaired, and believe me, there were still lots of tears.

Photo by Houcine Ncib



The fact is, when I opened the door despite my embarrassment, someone was there to help. Things weren't solved instantly, but help was with me, and because of that, I was given the strength to do the next thing in front of me.

One of the turbulent situations of the past year was my relationship with my teenage daughter. Being a teenager is hard enough, but once COVID-19 lockdowns hit, things took a turn for the worse. She would lock herself in her room, and the only time I saw her was when she was yelling at me or coming out to eat. Seeing a smile from her was rare, and every time I would hear her footsteps come down the hallway, I would be waiting with a hug and hoping for a smooth moment together. My hopes were usually dashed when instead of a hug, I was met with a glare. I felt helpless and rejected with every interaction.

Just like when our pipes burst, I felt helpless. I knew that despite my embarrassment about our relationship, I needed to reach out for help. In this situation, the rescuers were her therapist and a parenting coach.

I learned that her behavior had little to do with me, and it was most likely something she was going through. Dr. Cam Ph.D. is a popular Adolescent Psychologist and Family Success Coach. In one of her free resource guides, called *10 Secrets to Raising Teens* she says, "It may be difficult to believe, but when your teen is giving you attitude, rolling her eyes at you, or asking you to drop her off a block away from her friend's house, she still needs your support and approval more than ever." (1)

With that in mind, I decided not to take it personally, put myself in her shoes, and relentlessly pursue her. Just like repairing our house and replacing damaged items after the pipes burst, it took a lot of hard work, and things weren't solved instantly.

I started putting encouraging notes on her bedroom door every morning. She tore them down. I would make her favorite foods and bring them to her room. I never got a thank you. I enlisted a trusted friend to drive her to her activities, so she had another adult to talk to. Sometimes she was silent. I always invited her to watch TV with me at the end of the day. She usually said no.

I often got a door slammed in my face, but much to my surprise, my relentless pursuit started to work. She eventually started coming out of her room and engaging with the family again. It took a while, but our relationship became even better than before her reclusive and grumpy behavior.

Now that we're through that rough patch, I asked my daughter to help me understand what helped. This is what she told me.

1. Leaving notes on her door effectively spoke words of affirmation and love to her, which helped. According to her, it gave her space but also let her know I was there for her.
2. Having another trusted adult in my daughter's life gave her space from me but gave her a safe person to talk to if she wanted to. My daughter felt safe enough to talk when she needed to.
3. When she did communicate with me, I would listen without judgment. According to her, this made her feel secure and comfortable.
4. She said by bringing food to her room instead of demanding, and she comes out of her room, it showed her that I respected her feelings. I met her where she was instead of insisting on the opposite.
5. Inviting her on walks, to play family games, and watch TV, made her feel wanted even if she didn't want to join.

Hearing these words from my daughter's perspective made me feel like I did when the firefighters stopped the rushing water. That, my friend, is precisely what it's like when you reach out for help. Things weren't solved immediately, but help was with us, and we could move forward. My hope for all of you today is that despite the chaos in the world or your home right now, you open the door and receive support if you feel overwhelmed. You will be given the strength to do whatever is in front of you.

<https://drcam.ck.page/top10tips>

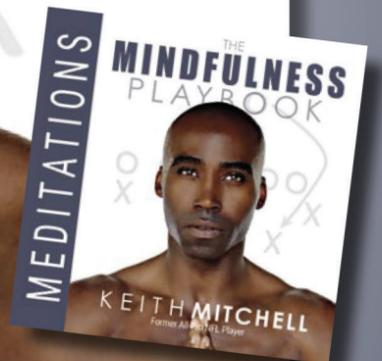


Born and raised in Salem, Oregon, **Jamie Edelbrock** is married to her high school sweetheart, and together they have three beautiful daughters. She has worn many hats, some of which include a homeschool mom, preschool director, family ministry director, and author.

Through years of experience working with children and raising her own, she knows how difficult parenting can be. She encourages others by sharing her own trials, triumphs, and sometimes hilarious stories. She is an advocate for children's mental health and is best known for her creativity, optimism, and kind heart. She is the author of the recently released book, *Tangled Up*.

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