

Katherine Schwarzenegger Pratt & Chris Pratt Real Talk on Motherhood, Fatherhood & Stepparenting

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SUMMARY

In this episode of "Parenting and You," Dr. Shafali speaks with Katherine Schwarzenegger Pratt and her husband Chris Pratt about their parenting journey, the dynamics of blended families, and the importance of communication and support in raising children. They share insights on the unique challenges and joys of parenting, particularly in a blended family context, and discuss how their own childhood experiences shape their parenting styles.

- Katherine emphasizes the importance of leading by example in parenting, inspired by her mother, Maria Shriver.*
- The transition from two to three children is discussed, highlighting the adjustment of dividing attention among siblings.*
- Chris shares how fatherhood has given him a renewed sense of purpose and the importance of teamwork in parenting.*
- Both Katherine and Chris stress the need for open communication and prioritizing the children's well-being in blended family dynamics.*
- Katherine reflects on her personal growth through parenting, including managing control and stress.*
- The couple discusses the significance of co-parenting and maintaining a positive environment for their children.*
- Katherine advocates for the importance of stepping back from ego in parenting roles, focusing instead on the child's needs.*
- Chris highlights the rewarding yet challenging nature of being a stepparent and the long-term benefits of investing in those relationships.*

Welcome to a very special episode of Parenting and You with me, Dr. Shafali. Today, I'm absolutely thrilled to be joined by New York Times best-selling author, podcaster, and devoted mother, one and only Katherine Schwarzenegger Pratt, along with her husband, Hollywood star Chris Pratt. Together, they are proud parents of three children. And Katherine is also a loving stepmother to Chris's son. In this incredible conversation, we dive deep into the unique ways mothers and fathers connect with their children, what kids truly mean to their parents, and how this bond shapes their overall well-being. We're also going to be talking a little bit about steparenting. Katherine shares how she's been inspired to lead by example, following in the footsteps of her remarkable mother, the one and only Maria Shriver. And we explore how both Katherine and Chris are committed to growing as individuals and as a couple with the shared goal of being the best parents they can be with their children as their focus. All this and much more coming up.

Joining me now is someone I deeply admire, Katherine Schwarzenegger Pratt. She's a New York Times best-selling author of multiple inspiring books, a passionate animal advocate, and a proud mother, and a stepmother. She's the host of the ever so popular podcast BDA Baby. And if you don't know what that stands for, before, during, and after baby. Katherine is truly a force, graceful, grounded, incredibly impactful in everything she does. Katherine, welcome to the podcast. Thank you for being here. I know I've been on your podcast, but now I get to have you on mine. I know. I'm so excited. And I mean, what an intro. I need to take you everywhere with me. Wow.

>> Take me. So, I know that you know, you were just breastfeeding your baby and now you're like in this podcast guest mode and then you'll probably do 10 more things in your day. So, what is different about baby number three? People often tell me like after baby number three, you just like give up all control. Like there is absolutely no control left in your life. Did you feel a big change from two to three? you know, I didn't feel a big change. I think the biggest thing for me after I've had each baby was just reacclimating to life with another human being that I want to give all of my love and attention and focus to. So, it's just kind of trying to figure out and navigate my time with each child. But, I would say that's the biggest adjustment.

Other than that, I don't know if it's because I come from a big family, but I've loved every minute of it. I think it's I mean, both of my daughters are obsessed with their baby brother. So, it's really a beautiful thing to see and they have so much fun. The only time that I'm ever like, "Okay, we have to be quiet." is when he's when I'm nursing him because he's at that age now where he gets distracted like he wants to look around and I'm like, "Let's just do the feeding." But otherwise, it's been I mean, I love it. It's been amazing. So, Katherine, when you went from one to two and both of them were girls, did you have any moments of the older one feeling displaced from her queendom? You know, often parents wonder about that and they worry about their firstborn being displaced by the second born. I feel like I really felt that. You know, that was kind of probably my biggest concern was how do I split myself and my time between both of my kids? That was my biggest adjustment was not, you know, the lack of sleep or the change in schedule or postpartum life. It was really just dividing myself between both of my kids. I think it helps that I have a sister who's very similar age difference to both of my girls. So, I'm familiar with the dynamic and also familiar to the sensitivities of the oldest daughter wanting her unique time because that's how I am and then also my second daughter wanting her own time and that's how my sister is. So, I think, you know, I'm also lucky my sister is very hands-on and very present in my kids' lives. So, I'm able to understand a lot of perspectives of raising both of my girls. And I would say I was nervous about the adjustment going from one to two and just being able to give them both all of my time. But it has worked out so far really well because they get along and they can play with each other now. They're at that age where they're four and three. So they're, you know, doing a lot together and have a lot of fun. And then also I my mom did this where she carved out time to spend one-on-one with each of us that was kind of mommy Catherine time, mommy Christina time. So I try to do that with my girls, but it's definitely has its moments of being challenging.

>> Yeah. So you were the oldest, then you had Christina, and then there's two boys. And it seems like you're kind of miraculously, unbeknownst to you, kind of are you going to have another boy? Are you going to shoot for another boy? So you kind of mimic your original family. >> My youngest brother, Christopher, is he's always joking. He's like, "You're literally recreating our entire family." I mean, that would be the greatest gift ever. I love my siblings and I'm so close to them and they have been I mean, they're like my whole world. I I do

everything with them. We all live, you know, a couple minutes apart. We talk several times a day and they're very present in my kids' lives. So, that's a huge blessing. And it's also something luckily that my husband is also really loving them being such a big part of our kids' lives. So, I mean, it would be great to be able to do that. I'd love to have more kids. Whether or not I have another boy is >> I know. Can you imagine? You're like, damn, the fourth one is a girl. You so close. But I know you're going to be fine either ways, but I think I've seen this trend that kids coming from big families typically want to recreate that.

>> There's something and most of them have pretty positive experiences. I don't feel the same with just like if there's just two in a family that they want to recreate that, but if it goes more than three, people want to shoot for that. So, what is it about growing up with a big family that is so appealing or has been so amazing for you? >> I really think that it's just you have these built-in best friends. My parents both raised us, you know, especially my mom who comes from a big family. She has four brothers and she's the only girl and she always talks just about how much her siblings mean to her, how, you know, blessed we are. even when we're fighting when we're younger and we're arguing with each other just that there is nothing like a sibling and I really took that to heart and I come from a family that puts family first and I really hope to pass that on to our kids and just the importance of you know family over everything and I've always felt that coming from my family and as I've gotten older it's just the best thing ever to have such a big family you and talk to them about everything. They're, you know, your support system, your advocates. They know your parents and your family dynamic in such a unique way. They know all the phases of you and love you through all of those phases. As the oldest in my family, I love my role as oldest. I know there have been all these different trends on social media talking about like the burdens of the oldest and the you know trauma of the oldest child and some of those are true of course you have a lot more responsibility and you're you know but I love being the oldest and I love my siblings. I love the dynamic. I I feel so lucky and so blessed. And I will say that my parents really instilled that importance of if you get in fights with your siblings, you work it out. you figure it out because that relationship is unlike anything else you'll ever have.

>> Yeah, I love that. Now, you were talking about your mother, Maria Shrivever, who comes from such a noted family in America, such an iconic family, but she one of the most down-to-earth people that you can meet considering even that she comes from such a family. What role has she played in your life? I know she's so imprinted in your psychology as now you're a mother, but tell us like the breakdown of ordinary moments that she has done things for you to create this identity now that you have of a family first kind of mother.

>> I think she just really, you know, she led by example. She would always talk to us about certain things. I think, you know, parents do that. They try to instill certain life lessons or certain values onto children. But I think if they don't really lead by example, it's hard for kids to absorb that. My mom has always led by example and my dad. But really, I would say, you know, now that I'm a mom especially, I look to my mom for everything. I call her with everything. I talk to her about everything. Whether it's being a wife and being a mom and even, you know, being a stepmom, I talk to her about all those dynamics, being a daughter, a friend, a sister. She's like the greatest well of wisdom I could ever have. And I really just think that she's led by example. So, you know, talk is great and it's obviously really important, but I think if you can have a parent that you really just watch how they behave, how they act, how they interact with people, how they lead their life, I think my mom, I admire all those aspects of how my mom has conducted herself in her life and continues to. So, for me, I just

kind of I watch everything she does. I know you just have this living breathing person next to you. I mean, she's just so incredible and what I see is that there's no competition, right? Like even now as you're talking about her, you're so proud of her. But many daughters will have competition or the other way around, right? And when I hear Maria talk about you girls and her sons, you know, especially your brother who's now an actor in the limelight, she's so giving and proud of the kids to take the spotlight. And often that doesn't happen. And you know there's a competition that occurs. So I can see that in your voice. Did you feel that you were a different mother with your girls and now with this boy you're kind of like holy cow this is a different animal.

>> It's definitely different. I mean I'll also say just to go back to the competition thing. I think you come when you come from a family of the size that I come from there might feel like you know there's a competitive nature between certain people. I think my parents really they're hungry people. They've accomplished a huge amount. Majority of everybody in our family's accomplished a huge amount. So there's always been like, you know, everybody doing lots of big things. And I think my mom really talked to us a lot about the importance of supporting one another and understanding that if my sister or my brothers become hugely successful, that's a great thing for everybody. and you you know you spend time getting comfortable with yourself and getting accepting of yourself and your own journey. But you know I am so proud of my mom when she accomplishes something, my dad when he accomplishes something, my siblings when they each accomplish something in their life personally or professionally because when my siblings and my parents are happy that makes me happy so it benefits everybody. So having that understanding I think is really important to be able to vocalize between siblings and in families especially big ones. And definitely there's a different thing with parenting a little boy you know just the feeling.

I mean, he's only 7 months old, but just like the feeling is so different right from the beginning of like, you know, with girls, it's a totally a different dynamic right from the beginning of, you know, I am so familiar with this cuz I'm so close to my mom and my sister and I have that with both of my girls of just like I love them. They're like my little best friends. They come everywhere with me and now I have this boy and I'm like obsessed with him and it's a totally different kind of obsession. But, you know, of course, the same love for all of my kids, but it's I mean, I'm so excited to see how it just like continues to evolve and I continue to learn about parenting a boy.

>> Yeah. So, talk to us about the shadow side, like the hardest moments or something that was really hard for you to see in the mirror that your child projected onto you that, wow, I didn't know I was so anxious or I didn't know I was OCD and needed to clean every second. You know, our children reveal to us such mysteries of ourselves that we've been hidden from, we deny or we we don't realize. What was one such pivotal kind of epiphenic discovery you you know found about yourself through your children, through that mirror?

>> Oh my gosh, so much. I mean, I would say that as the oldest in my family, I have a lot of oldest child traits. So like I like order. I like to be in charge of certain things. Some might call it control. [laughter] And I think with parenting, my oldest daughter is four and a half, but it's definitely taken me, you know, a moment to just say like, okay, this is not something that I'm going to control or also understanding that, you know, our kids are given to us to teach us a lot of lessons about ourselves and also just about life in general. And I see that with my

kids personalities so far. Like my oldest daughter is very confident, very strong willed and very determined and as is my second daughter. But just watching them and I'll say like, you know, I want let's do this and they'll say no, I want to do that. And so it's like a conversation that we're we have about certain things, especially as they get older. But it's all, you know, you notice as a parent certain things that are triggers for you that maybe you never thought of as being triggers for yourself. So >> what are some of yours if you can share?

>> I mean I think like the you know really relinquishing like okay not everything is going to be orderly, not everything is going to be neat and tidy, not everything is going to go to plan. I'm always somebody who's like I'm always been a punctual person and with kids. [snorts] I'm like if I'm 15 minutes late to something because someone's having a meltdown or because someone, you know, wanted to change their outfit or wanted to wear party shoes when we're not wear, you know, those kinds of things. That's just what's going to happen and that's going to be okay and everything is just going to be, you know, a deep breath.

But I had a moment last summer actually where I felt I was my sister was staying with us on a trip and same with my mom and we were all kind of going through like the day and I was going through all the motions of like okay it's bath time we have to get inside for dinner and we have to go to the pajamas and my sister and I are very open with each other and I was very pregnant also last the end of last summer and she was like you know you seem like you are so stressed right now and you don't seem like you are present to be enjoying all of the parts of this phase of motherhood. And of course, I was like, that is so rude. It's like instant offense to it. I really took it into consideration and I was like, you're right. I don't have to stress out about everything going to plan, everything being orderly all the time. I can just, you know, let my kids not go to bed at a certain time in the summer when they're spending time with their grandma or their aunt and, you know, relinquish control in those areas and let them have, you know, fun, let them do their thing. and also really trying to implement a practice in my life that allowed me to come from a place where I wasn't reacting to everything because it was like every little thing I felt last summer I was having these reactions to certain things that just weren't me like it was you know when my daughter would get upset about something I would get so stressed and my lid would flip and her lid would flip and it was just like you know not a recipe for a peaceful conversation to help someone co-regulate, which is what kids need, of course. So, I started doing TM, transcendental meditation, and implementing that into my life every morning before my kids wake up. And I took a course with an amazing teacher named Bob Roth. And I did a couple intensive days of implementing that into my life. And now it's become a regular practice of mine that I do every morning. And since having my son, sometimes I have to wake up at 4:30 or 4:45 to get my 15 minutes of meditation in. But it's made such a huge difference in my life. And such a huge difference with how I parent and how I mother and even how I am as a wife and sister and friend. And it's been so helpful for me to be able to come from like a calm, stable, clear-headed place so I can be there to co-regulate for my kids and also be present in this, you know, amazing chapter of motherhood.

>> It's so funny you say that because I think if you didn't have your sister as that mirror, you know what then, right? And she was able to stop you in your tracks and go, "Wow, you don't look like you're enjoying." And we do take it as an insult because we want to be the mother who can do it all and enjoy it, right? Like so you took it like an insult rather than like, hey, she was actually caring about you because we want to be every kind of mother. How do you stop yourself from being every kind of mother like you know now your kids are young, you have to say no to other things, you have to say yes to certain things. How do you stop yourself?

Especially coming from that very highly accomplished family that you come from to not feel that burden of you know now I have to write another bestselling book and now I have to go for this charity or event or how do you manage that achievement complex perhaps that you may be battling with. I still deal with that. Like I think that there's, you know, part of me that is very easy and quick to make decisions about like, no, I'm not doing that. No, I am doing that.

And then there's also part of me that's like, you know, oh no, I want to write another book or I want to be able to go out and and do my thing. It's been a learning process for me because I also remember with my parents, you know, when my mom would have a baby or when she was focused on us kids, my mom always worked and, you know, was always doing a lot when she when I was growing up and she was always very present. And I don't think that I really registered how much effort and time that takes until I became a mom myself. And I've always respected my mom and had a huge amount of admiration and respect for her. And definitely taken it to a whole other level since becoming a mom myself. And also understanding that like, you know, I look back at my childhood and my dad maintained going and filming and doing his thing. And my mom was really the one who, you know, was in charge of our schedules and in charge of making sure everything was done for us kids and and my dad was very present as well. But his career didn't really skip a beat with adding children to his and my mom's did.

>> And that was something that when I had my first daughter that I talked to my mom about because I was like, "Wait a minute. Mhm. When my husband goes and films and does his thing, he continues to do that. And I'm now thinking of totally different things that I never thought about. And I have known from the beginning that I wanted to have kids and I wanted to be a mom and I love it. And also there are moments where I'm like, wait, I want how do I go and do a book tour now with three little kids and a stepchild? And I'm thinking of like all of the different logistical things and it's just a totally different level of things to think about now. And I'm very clear and I'm always clear with people that I work with that my kids are my number one priority. So everything comes after my children. And I feel really lucky that I'm able to do that. And I'm also really lucky that I have a husband who goes to do his work and also prioritizes coming home to be present for the kids. And that's a huge blessing as well. But it's definitely, you know, it's a learning curve for me. I'm only 4 and 1/2 years into motherhood and balancing certain things. And also I know that when I launched my book, you know, my children's book two years ago, that book tour looked very different than it had in the past, >> right?

>> It's a learning experience for me because I over booked myself and I realized like I can't do what I used to do with little children and you know life looks different and that was an adjustment. And so I think all these things are going to be learning experiences for me of you know how to manage my time, how to what to prioritize, what to focus on, what you know not focus on right now and also being open with myself of like how does that make me feel? How do I deal with that? How do I manage those adjustments and know that this is an amazing chapter and season and things have to change and shift. We're going to take a quick break, but don't go anywhere. When we come back, we'll have more with the amazing Katherine Schwarzenegger Pratt, and we'll be joined by her Hollywood star husband, Chris Pratt.

You [music] know, so many mothers in my practice come to me with resentment. you know, [music] you know,

my husband's life, it didn't change at all and look at me and and you know, part of me really empathizes, of course, but another part is kind of this practical side of me which tells them, you know, this is the woman's body, you know, I mean, it was meant to give birth if it if it wanted to, if it chose to. And the father, no matter how amazing that father is, it will never occupy his brain and his psychology the way motherhood occupies your brain. And that's what children need is this kind of mother. And one of you have to do it.

So you know it happens to be you. So do you want to celebrate it or do you want to begrudge him because he doesn't have that kind of chemistry that you have? >> Right? And no matter how amazing fathers are, they just don't respond. You know, I ask so many men about what goes through your mind when a baby cries. And most of them will be like, "Oh my god, I want to run away, lock myself up." And women go like on a plane, right? Men will, you know, give the snarly face like, "Keep your baby quiet." And women will be like, "Oh, can I help you?"

Right? However, that does change. Now I'm in my 50s. Now I'm becoming more like a man. I'm like giving snarly looks. I've become very mean because I'm like I don't want to hear another baby. I've been there, done that. But for my entire, you know, 30s and 40s, I was like, oh, but men don't have that reaction. It's like a biochemical thing, you know. So, I think for women, >> part of us needs to let go of this resentment to men. You know, it's not really their fault that they don't have the same investment that we do.

>> I will just say that my husband just walked in and brought me a coffee. A that's so sweet. >> He has he >> All I heard was we have to give the husbands and I think you're right. Hello doctor. >> Hi. How are you? Nice to see you. [laughter] >> Comparing the reactions and the roles of men and women in parenting. >> Oh, sweet. >> Yeah. >> And how we women, you know, complain sometimes that fathers don't feel the same, you know, paranoia, anxieties, obsessions that we women do. So then we blame you. Oh, you don't care because I'm obsessed with the baby 24/7 and look at you, you're going to play golf. Or look at you, you slept through the night. And then we begrudge our husbands. But really, it's no comparison because it's such a different brain chemistry, biochemistry. They just have a different relationship to parenthood than mothers do. And there's no point comparing the two. You know, >> I think that we have moments where we feel that. And also I will say that we have really open communication. So when I do feel that like if I'm feeling like oh I haven't slept in many years or if he's out working and hasn't slept. I think that we try to communicate positive affirmations to each other.

Like he'll say to me like oh I know you haven't slept. Do you want to go on a walk or do you want because I refuse to like take naps. I think would say to nap, but I think also understanding that we're on the same team. Like I think a lot of parents and couples maybe get competitive with what they're >> I'm doing this and you're not doing that. You're doing that and I'm not doing this. But I think like we're on the same team of we're just we're trying to raise good human beings and also be there for one another.

>> That's amazing. Can I ask Chris a question about fatherhood? You want to answer? >> Yeah, sure. >> Okay. So, what do you feel, you know, has been the biggest transformation in your I know you already had a kid before coming into this dynamic, but so you have four children. How was that transition from, you know, a

single guy to now a father of four? And what would you encourage other men out there to embrace that you may have had a hard time, but now you have embraced? I think I've found a purpose in my life. My list of priorities has shifted and I have a purpose that supersedes any other purpose I may have had before. And so it's a really wonderful thing. In fact, cuz I think a man needs a purpose. And without it, you're a little bit rudderless in the storm. And I think we have in us this desire in our hearts to be filled with something that gives us joy. And with a lack of purpose, we fill it with something that gives us pleasure. And that's only momentary. And it can and it can lead you down the wrong paths. It can lead you into bad relationships. It can lead you to drinking alcohol or using drugs or abusing your body or or whatever you like chase this vicious cycle of filling this hole in our heart that can only be filled by God and by purpose. And I think for us, you know, for me, I'm living in like what I really feel is like a calling. And I feel like, you know, having met Catherine and having children now, there's things I'm going to say no to that I would have said yes to 10, 15 years ago. and those things I would have said yes to wouldn't have been good for me. It gives you drive. It gives you purpose and a reason. And I think going back to what you had said about if women are, you know, resentful of men that are not obsessing and thinking about babies the way that it's kind of a big difference and what makes a partnership so beautiful between a man and a woman raising children. And it's really important to have that both, you know, masculine and feminine energy in in a household raising kids, two people, two partners raising kids because it does take a team. It's, you know, men may not be thinking their time, may not using their brain thinking about things, but they're usually using their body doing things, >> and giving themselves to this thing, the result of which is to provide for children and for a house and a home and and a happiness and wellness for our families. And so, yeah, it's been really great. I mean, I tell people about it's like never a dull moment and every moment dull. Mhm.

>> There are peaks that are more joyous than anything you could ever possibly imagine. And there are valleys that that can feel long and trying, but each of those peaks make it worth it. The highs are very high. The lows are not that low. And unlike a life without purpose, the highs are really high, but the lows are really, really low. And that's why a lot of people are really depressed. >> I also, he was really funny when we had our first daughter. He was like, "This is very different." like girls are totally different cuz he had only had experience with a boy and so also just like he's evolved a lot as a father with you know now two daughters and and now they're you know four and three so they have their own personalities and opinions and >> totally different experience for him >> 100%.

>> Yeah. And now you have another boy. Tell us a little bit for stepparents out there. What do you feel has been the thing that has helped you, you know, integrate your families? What part of your ego do we need to let go of in order to really integrate, you know, this whole step family situation? And what helps people? So, if you could give advice to parents out there who have a blended family, you know, I know ego can get involved. What part of that ego shows up and then how can we help dissolve that? I mean, number one thing I say is get a step parenting therapist or step parenting coach because I got that right when we got engaged and it's been incredibly helpful for me and also just understanding my role as a stepparent. She's been like essential to me with everything just like how to communicate, how to also think of yourself in the role because stepparenting like parenting has no, you know, handbook and also I would say because I have the benefit of being in both roles. Stepparenting is extra confusing because you aren't a parent, you're not a nanny, you're not an assistant, >> right? You have responsibilities in all of those areas, but you're not either of them, >> right?

>> It's a confusing thing to try to navigate where you fit in. And every dynamic is obviously very different with people's level of involvement in their stepchild's life. So, that's unique to every situation. But I would say that we stepparent or I stepparent but we co-parent all very well which is a huge blessing and you know takes a lot of work but it works when everybody is willing to put in the work and when it comes to ego that definitely pops up for me for sure and I always go back to understanding that this isn't about me it's about the child. So, I think if everybody can get on the same page of this isn't about any of us, it's about the child, you know, their happiness, their well-being, and put them above everything else, which is easier said than done, but that's the goal, right?

Is like the goal is with all four of us is, you know, the child's happiness, the child's well-being, and ego comes in, but you got to smack it down because it's not about that. >> Yeah. Yeah. Chris, any words of wisdom to stepparents out there? >> It's a tough job. You know, it reminds me of like um in film making, we have these mocap actors who are like I'll do these movies that have big visual effects and characters that are completely animated, right? And so on the day when we're shooting, there's an actor there who's wearing like a suit and they're walking around. are doing all the lines and they memorize the scenes and they walk around and do and then by the time the movie comes out, their voice is replaced by a voice actor and their body is replaced by animation.

>> Right. Right. That parenting is a little bit like mocap acting because in the end you don't end up getting the credit you deserve >> because children are children and they're constantly going through their like she said they're on their own paths and they're probably having to continually process the fact that they are the child of children of divorce and you know that could be like a thing. And so if a parent is in there doing the hard work in the point of like creating structure for a child and holding children accountable and it's not a biological child it can feel like thankless but it's a really really important job and at the end of the day when kids grow up and become adults I think in hindsight they recognize the hard work that went into it. So, it's an investment that pays off in the long run when you're there and present for a child because that develops that relationship you developed is really a strong bond regardless of, you know, biological affiliation that down the road kids learn to really appreciate.

They look back and say, "Wow, I can't believe you were there for me in that way." >> Help me with this struggle that many parents of blended families come to me with. They do come to me with hurt and pain. So say in your case, okay, just using as an example, Katherine would come to me saying, you know, Chris and his ex do things that way and because that's the way they do it. I feel like I'm out of that dynamic. And then the husband would say perhaps to that wife, you know, yeah, this is my kid and this is how I deal with it. So this I, you know, this is mine and I and I get a lot of people in pain around that. And then when I talk to that person who's saying me and mine, they're like, well, you know, this is how I've done it with this kid. Say they met later in life, this is how I've raised the kid for 12 years and now she comes along and she wants us to date and she doesn't understand that I've already created this dynamic with my kid. So with you, I don't know how old your stepson was, Katherine, when you were introduced into his life, but how do you help parents let go of that me my or feel threatened by the mimi?

>> I mean, I would totally understand that. I would say that we never had that. He never was like, I did this, this

is my blah blah blah. That was never a thing that >> Jack was very young when we met still. >> Yeah. I was never Yeah, that was never a dynamic. I think that would be really challenging if somebody did have that. That would be hard. Also say that my uncle Bobby, I had the privilege of being able to watch him be a very hands-on and great stepfather. So when Chris and I got engaged and even before when we started dating, I talked to him about everything. And one of the things he said to me from the very beginning was you always respect the parents as the parents. And you also need to wrap your head around the fact that your role as a stepparent is not about you. It's never going to be about you. It's always about the child. And so in the beginning I was like that's not fair, >> right?

>> It needs to also be about me. I'm a person too. And of course yes you are. And also it isn't about me. It's about all being on the same team to prioritize the person or if you have multiple stepchildren, multiple kids. Again, there are such complicated dynamics because I have friends who will say, "Oh, can you talk to my friend who's a stepparent and they're having a hard time and can you offer words of wisdom?" And I'm like, "Yes, I'm happy to talk to people about it." And also I'm still always learning and it's always still an evolving process and people have really challenging dynamics. And so I'm grateful that again that there are four of us who prioritize a child's happiness and well-being. We make an effort to communicate. We make an effort to get along and to be on the same page. And I also, you know, I learned a lot of that dynamic of wanting to have everything be running smooth and being happy and communicating well from my mom. Cuz even when my parents split up, my mom still never has said anything negative about my dad to us kids. And my dad's never said anything negative to us about my mom. They've communicated really well. They, you know, prioritize us kids. they always looked at, you know, 10 years out, 20 years out, being at weddings, being around births and birthdays and things like that as those being the goals. And I always really admired that part of how my parents handled their separation. And I think that that's something that kind of translates over to co-parenting and parenting in a blended family is like you never say anything other than what is the focus of the child. And that's been something that I've learned from my parents dynamic as well is just like you know adjusting.

>> Yeah. Amazing. Thank you both so much. Thanks Chris for hopping in. >> I had no idea I was just bringing some coffee. >> That's a blended interview. Yeah, thanks a lot. Uh, such a pleasure. Thank you. Thank you. And Katherine, you know, I just love, uh, meeting you ever so often on your podcast. V, V, Chris. And, uh, I can't wait to celebrate more children. I'll have you on again after child number I know you're going to have child number four. I can smell the fourth one coming.

>> Yeah. Well, you're amazing and I love what you do in the world. always here to cheerlead you and uh just thanks for everything >> and thank you to you for all of your parenting wisdom. I always Chris and I send each other videos back and forth of all of your wisdom and your guidance and it's so helpful >> to have your voice in so many moments that especially as I can go back and say like, "Oh, that didn't pertain to me then, but it pertains to me now." So being able to have that is really special. So thank you for all the work you do.

>> Of course. Thanks, Katherine. Bye. You can hear more from Katherine on her ever so popular podcast BDA Baby wherever you listen to podcasts. [music] Thank you so much for listening and I will see you on the next episode of Parenting and You with me, Dr. Chafali. Parenting and You with Dr. Shafali is [music] for

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