

What No One Tells You About Parenting (Revisit)

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SUMMARY

Dr. Becky and Maile Teal discuss the emotional complexities of parenthood, emphasizing the need for an "emotional registry" alongside traditional baby registries. They explore the feelings of loss, the importance of self-care, and the necessity of understanding one's own needs and those of a partner when transitioning into parenthood.

- *Parenthood brings both gains and losses, including a loss of personal identity and quiet time.*
- *It's crucial to prepare for emotional challenges and acknowledge mixed feelings about parenting.*
- *Self-care is vital; parents should prioritize their own needs to avoid burnout and guilt.*
- *Conversations about parenting styles and childhood experiences can strengthen partnerships.*
- *Calm presence is essential when caring for babies, as children learn regulation through co-regulation with parents.*
- *Parents should practice deep breathing and affirming language to help manage their child's distress.*
- *The journey of parenthood is a learning experience that fosters personal growth and compassion.*

I'm Dr Becky and this is good inside I'm a clinical psychologist I'm a mom of three and I'm on a mission to rethink the way we raise our children today I'm talking with my league teal she's the founder of curl box a mother of two young kids and just an all-around amazing human being and sturdy leader and we're going to get real with you about Parenthood about some of the changes you go through about what kind

of struggles you might have and what all parents really need in their Registries and no not your baby stuff registry your emotional registry let's get into it now I want to talk to you about self what happens to you as an individual you know it's all about your birth plan and it's like but what about you after this what about your relationship the couple

and the baby because it gets Wild yeah it's you know I don't know why I'm thinking about this conversation that we're gonna have as like the emotional registry oh the emotional registry and what are you putting like what do you need yeah and how much time do you need to spend on that because it's probably more than whatever time you need in the uh the product registry yes probably definitely definitely so let's let's start let's start using our time let's

jump into the emotional registry of the transition to Parenthood okay let's talk about the self and I think the biggest thing is just this deep sense of loss it's the best way to start because we expect the opposite weight loss did you miss but I I don't know having a baby that's plus one right and you're like yeah yeah no no me and you

both had the plus one and the plus two I have the plus three and a hundred percent this is

a two things are true there is a lot we gain when we have a baby and there's a lot we lose or that we have to fight to keep what did you have to fight to keep or what do you think about that what did I what do I still have to fight to keep it was so tough for me because I didn't expect to not know myself at all like I didn't expect to just feel like I was

constantly standing outside of myself you know sometimes it's like it's the physical changes but it's just this thing of like this schedule now you know the crying it's like I didn't realize how much I should have valued how quiet my house was and so it's like it's the crying it's it's the feeding it's the the schedule is he getting enough sleep his brain development and then this constant prep for the next stage and it's just like where am I in

this and I promised myself that I wasn't going to become like super mom you know everything about me is not going to be about being a mom I am going to be my own woman I will get back in my heels I will wear my jeans and it was this constant daily fight of like but my feet hurt I can't yes and and just for everyone listening right I know my leak and I this is not like a fear episode

this is not like don't don't do it you know no everything is lost no but knowledge is power and I always think that feelings are hard enough to deal with that if we layer on surprise or oh I didn't know I was gonna feel this way or is this normal or nobody told me this or nobody talks about this so I must be weird or a bad mom to be feeling this way if we add any of those elements to

the already hard feelings well that's what balloons them into impossible feelings so for everyone listening this is meant to help you prepare so when inevitably hard moments come or we're going to get more into this idea of what really feels lost or what do I have to fight to keep at least you'll be able to say to yourself I totally remember two moms talking about this so I'm right there next to them like okay this feeling stinks and it's hard and

there's nothing wrong with me for feeling it yes because you'll look on social and you'll see everyone looking happy and it's like why is that not my experience exactly so this idea of loss right loss of quiet loss of loss of time time what was I doing with my time my husband and I always joke we were on the subway one day and we were like with our baby like going somewhere doing a million different things yeah and we

were looking at each other being like what did we used to do on the weekend right and we were like I feel like we did like brunch and shopping like is that what like I feel like that's made up like eight hours I don't even know yeah we'd go get eggs and we'd like peruse a store like what happened to that what happened yes and it's not to say you can't do that but what does that

require planning a nap schedule a sense of okay well the baby might wake up if the baby's with me can I ask a parent do I have a parent nearby do I have anybody I can trust oh I don't like it involves so much and it's important when you have a baby and you have that weekend to be prepared for my weekends feel really

different and I can love my baby and miss having brunch I can love being a

mom and miss the quiet I can love feeding my child and miss the time when I had no response ability to feed anyone else but myself both are true and the more we can get in that mindset in advance I'm just gonna have many feelings and they're gonna be mixed it's not going to be all from the good amazing bucket and I think you're right there's this glamorization of oh my baby means everything so we really need it's

like it's like yeah let's just laugh just stop just stop right yeah totally sometimes I'm like I'm just glad you've established like that's not exactly like my My Vibe I'm just not going to spend more time in the like parenting is just amazing space like we've established that because parenting is amazing and parenting is so hard and becoming apparent really means that the things that used to feel good for us just us we have to really make efforts to preserve that so

Miley what would you tell a mom and it's not always this concrete but the first couple weeks if they know they're going to have some laws how can they preserve something that's theirs or for them something that I did the second time around because I didn't know that it was the loss was going to be so strong um is that I really had a plan going into the second child and I really managed sort of like

who I wanted around how often I wanted them there and I recognized the privilege in this but I made sure that I had my food planned because I had someone come who did the grocery shopping there was just always food for me in the refrigerator that I didn't you know I didn't have to do anything but either heat it or eat it salads um and I even planned for postpartum massage just trying really hard to just

ground myself and then I just broke some of the rules I think motherhood there's this this laundry list of do this and don't do that and I was like you know I've kept the first one alive I think I'm going to really do what I think is going to work for me and I did and something else that I did is um I have been in therapy weekly for nearly a decade and I just kept my

sessions and so I it was just like you're responsible for the baby when I have this 45 minutes yeah and some of my skin out on my front porch zooming with my therapist and I'll never forget this compliment she was like you look like the most well-rested new mom I've ever seen and I'm like because I am serious about this this time around yes having time for yourself after you've had a child is a battle especially when

they're a baby and they're so unpredictable so especially with your first kid right the idea that oh if I want to eat a salad if I want to have a bite of a sandwich that actually might be hard to do sitting down by myself yes right and so is it therapy is it taking a walk I think often about how many people want to get you baby gifts and for everyone right now to think should I be saying

those people honestly I'd rather you sign up for a day and bring me a meal yes maybe I'd rather that or I'm gonna ask half the people do I really need the this toy into that toy right if I can't afford to have someone cook

my meals could I tell someone that's actually what I would like as a gift a day of dinner yes and then I don't have to worry about it so I can get that time to

myself so I don't have so much loss because now instead of oh no what am I gonna eat I might be able to take a long shower and thinking in advance I actually think about all the baby gifts I got that if someone else had given me something that kind of sustained me and that would have allowed me to take that walk or watch that show or do something else really just for Me Maybe exercise uh that would have given me so much more

but I think something we should I want to just say and definitely get your thoughts on this is that there is something about motherhood that I think the idea of sacrifice that you're not a good mother if you're not running yourself ragged and like letting people know you know I'm doing laundry I'm doing this I'm doing that and I know that there is a level of guilt around like you should never look relaxed or you should never look refreshed like you

should look like you're struggling because that's kind of what it is you know I've seen some new moms who were like yep the babies with Grandma and I'm going to the spa you know and people you can see in the comments of like you know this is crazy one time before you ever met me and I had my first kid I wrote about how I was taking care of myself and how I think I left him I think he

was maybe two three months and I maybe went for like a day out of town and someone emailed me how dare you leave your kid behind when you beg to have these kids and I was just like first of all who are you but it just made me think how many people actually deal with this from strangers or family members where they feel like if they're not sacrificing they aren't being good parents wow I mean this is

so important yes and we need to get rid of that idea of good motherhood means self-sacrificial motherhood or even the idea of selfless like to me that's the most disturbing idea as a parent as a sturdy leader you want me to be without self like how am I going to do anything running around in circles I know it's not good for me as an individual and I can say definitively it's not good for your kid it is not good for your kid to

have a leader who can't be located because they are seriously running ragged so yes we need to change this the first thing I would ask people to reflect on is what do I know about my relationship with my own needs right it always goes back to this how do I feel about the fact that I need things for myself does that make me kind of have a panic attack I know so many women who say to me my

life would be easier if I didn't need things for myself we've learned this yeah if I could just caretake and fill myself up by pouring myself out life would be easier it doesn't make sense even visually right but we've been taught this and so to the degree taking care of yourself away from a child leaves you with guilt I think it's really powerful to consider like I didn't come out of the womb that way there's no way I came into this

world thinking I want to have no needs I want to just do for others that's something we've learned through our

family of origin through Society through gender roles through traditional ideas of motherhood so many different things and we can't in one Fell Swoop unlearn that but we can get curious about our discomfort so I would say to parents is it's really important to be curious about that guilt rather than read the

guilt as a sign that you're doing something wrong that discomfort is probably a sign you're doing something new huh it's very new for me to say yes I love my child and yes I need time away because I actually do have needs for myself that aren't fulfilled by taking care of others that's new and whenever we do something new that's uncomfortable so that's the first thing the other thing I would say is you you really did

get an email from someone criticizing you but so many of us determine our actions by what we fear other people are thinking yes like no one even says anything what would this person think what are what are my mom friends gonna think if I don't show up to the play group because I say oh actually I needed to do this thing for myself if we're going to get into the thoughts and minds of other people we might as

well make them work for us I always think that like why we're making it up okay right so I have so often imagined myself when I've gone away for a weekend or I've just said I need to go do this thing for myself I will imagine the people around me being like you go girl you are setting a great role model for your child that I love you and I'm there but you know what sometimes I need to be

there for myself and that's important too I actually make up that they're cheerleading for me we might as well right and I think that's really powerful to say hey I'm not going to that mommy and me group I'm gonna imagine the other one saying you're an inspiration for me because I know you're a great mom I know you and you're showing me great moms don't quote do it all they don't run themselves into the ground they pause

and take care of themselves you're inspiring me you might as well make up those thoughts and it can really then feel empowering instead of kind of still crushing I feel like in your relationship you don't know the person you're with until you enter this new parenting relationship and all of a sudden it's like who are you you know did I ever know you and you and I were talking about in ways to prepare having some

conversations like what are the real conversations that you should be having besides middle names names yes and so on so now we're doing emotional registry for the couple yes right if you if you're with if you're with someone raising your child great you get to know someone let's say you have a partner you get to know them and I think the part that's surprising when we raise a kid is oh I am just watching your childhood play out I am

literally watching the way you were raised yes play out now and I didn't know all that like I was living with 30 year old you I was living with 40 year old you I was living with 25 year old you wow I just watched the first 18 years of your life happen yeah the way you reacted to our kid I just I just watch the way your parents parented you it's not even conscious it's not and we

we really learn so much about our own childhoods and our partners childhoods when we have a child so often in

my private practice people will be talking to me about oh I really struggle to to stay calm when my kids crying or my baby's crying I know they're just a baby but us does something in me and if I say something that's so concrete to them as I wonder how you are responded to during your tough moments they'll say I don't

remember right we have such a limited idea of memory right I don't remember with your words oh you just live that memory yeah that memory came out if you have a hard time maintaining a sense of groundedness and sturdy leadership when your child is dysregulated we know from your body circuitry it's the best evidence we have wow it must have been really really hard for my parents to stay grounded when I was in a state of

distress and so what did I learn to do as a child shut down shut down go away go away go away what happens when my child cries shut down shut down go away go away and we try to make it all go away yeah and I know so many people with their Partners it is hard to watch this because some of these issues never come up until you have a kid they don't they they do not and I remember bringing my son home

and like I said the crying I like I started to realize with my partner that he was raised in a way of like positive everything you know if there's crying if there's sadness like everyone's working so hard to get back to the happy place yeah get to the house how fast can we like stop the crying how fast can we feel better how fast can we stop arguing about whatever it is that I'm doing you know and I think the

difference between he and I is that I had done all of this sort of like work in therapy and so I kind of knew maybe this would be my natural reaction I'm always sort of like playing through what else could I do or you know how can I stay calm and also just not being like understanding that babies cry I think I want to know a couple of solves from you because this is what I was talking to

you the other day and I was like okay so what is the conversation that we can have with someone before we're using the Flow app and planning what do I get to know so I'm going to take a page from the gottman's book The gotmans are just expert amazing data-driven couples therapists who have an amazing blog with a million resources and amazing books to read with your partner and they really get to the essence of how to communicate

how to connect okay so they have this concept Called Love maps and I love it and they say we really need to become expert in our partners love maps and not from the perspective of fixing it but really just getting to know it so how might that look in advance of having a child that's a great conversation like you said my league hey let's just talk about the fact that babies cry okay how do you think your parents dealt with you when

you cried yeah who had more tolerance who couldn't deal who avoided who got to Happy who yelled what about okay let's make up a situation you're in a toy store buying a present for a cousin for their birthday and you start wailing on the floor as a three-year-old saying I want this too what happens you go first and then I go first of course we don't really remember but my guess is every single person could probably say how their parents

would have responded yeah let's learn about that and if a partner's like why are we talking about this I think you can be very direct well a couple of reasons first of all where bring a child into the world and it's really important we know as much about each other as possible and we can want to parent a certain way and that's logic in our brain separate from that is how we were parented and actually how we were

parented impacts how our body develops circuitry and that activates before our thoughts it can overpower so even if we want to do things one way if we don't have a baseline understanding of how we will responded to we really won't have the foundation to even do things differently and I know we both want a parent in a way that's respectful and blah blah blah so there's no criticism there's not well I'm saying this because I think your mom

was pretty bad we both know that no this is a connection building exercise and what's your role if your partner does open up really I'm going to be very concrete here I'm so glad you're sharing that with me that's really important I bet that didn't feel good for you I know you don't even consciously remember but maybe I had something similar I'm sure that didn't feel good for me also wow we both want to do things really

differently than our parents did them in that respect not hey what are you going to do about that we don't want to make this you know a me against you situation just really safe and connected at first yes and then I think also other conversations with your partner who changed diapers who wash bottles who knew the schedule and if there were rigid gender roles surfacing that now is really important because if you want to do things differently then we have to

know for ourselves what the gender roles were and for our partner just because someone says well my dad never changed diapers it doesn't mean for me I would say to my husband well I guess you don't have to change diapers right no but it gives me an understanding that when I get frustrated oh I wish he would change more diapers and say if I can say to myself yes and he's breaking Cycles right now I do want him

to do more and I can talk to him about that let me just soften for a second thinking every diaper he changes is actually a really big shift so let me go in guess with my desire but also with my foundational understanding yes yes okay so emotional registry self and couple and now I want to talk about the baby emotional registry and all the food like yeah let's just talk about that yeah because it's like kind

of the most important foreign why isn't there ever anything that tells you that you will spend most of your day before you go to bed the moment you wake up thinking about 700 meals your kids gonna need that day is there any nutritional value will they still like it this time did they get enough I I think the food the food the food it's really true I think I have 10 minutes of my day where i'm not thinking of my my

children's foods are having to do I really think those 10 those are my zen meditation minutes the other moments it's in when you have a baby they eat constantly yes right people need to know that too like oh the feeding schedule yeah yeah not the beginning they're eating they're sleeping they're eating they're eating they're it's like it's just it's it's constant it's constant and and then okay you might think oh I don't have a baby anymore it's either

right I'm ordering food I'm wondering if I have food I'm cooking food I'm giving food I'm making new food I'm cleaning up and then I'm giving my child the same plate I swear it's two minutes later evidently hours you have passed but now we're eating new food now we're having a snack now we're cleaning that it and then you get to those maybe 10 minutes or maybe those 10 minutes are spread throughout the day and you're like why

do I feel lighter and you're like because I'm not thinking about food that's the only reason and then you're back to thinking about food it's never ending it's never ending and so the second time around because I know that there's so much feeding and when they're small it's like they it's so slow is that I made this Netflix playlist of just stuff that I knew I'd want to see because you're gonna sit down and it's just it takes a while

yes and these images of like I'm just gonna stare into my baby's eyes and just it's going to be so amazing for like 10 hours of a day right great do that when that feels right breastfeeding bottle feeding any feeding can connect with your baby but also it's just a lot of hours and in the beginning right let's do some truths about babies right no let me say just for the record I feel like babies are

amazing you just produce this tiny human it popped out and like it's it's amazing and there's so much love and they're these amazing moments yes and and I'm going to try to think who's gonna say it first babies are not fine they're not we say that they're not bad they're not fun babies are not fun they're not a party okay no one's at the Disco it's just this ball of dependency yes if you like people being heavily dependent on

you there's a part of this that you will enjoy but if you are fiercely independent and you're used to doing your thing this can be really hard I think that is something we want to underline for people because look having a baby is hard and exhausting for for everyone right for moms for dads for for everyone involved and there is this kind of temperamental difference I've noticed and when you spoke to if you kind of like dependency let me just say there's

nothing wrong with that and right at all if you're someone who you really love caregiving yes you love having someone Close to You Love you're a cuddler you like that closeness and you think oh baby on my chest I love holding babies it's still going to be hard it's still going to be exhausting but the baby stage will speak to some of your strengths and there's a different kind of temperament where you're thinking I am someone who actually even likes the

people around me to be a little bit more independent and what's really interesting I've noticed is that baby stage is a little bit extra hard if you're someone who likes like you said a little bit more of that Independence that doesn't mean you're a bad mom that doesn't mean you're gonna have a horrible first year but going into it kind of doing a self-assessment yes where am I and my league I think you and I and just two people sample size of two

right now we're similar yes right I I did not cry when my babies were done breastfeeding or bottle feeding I didn't know I was like oh are you gonna miss this I was like no I'm not yeah yeah um but but other people are like I'm really gonna miss that nothing wrong we're all different and so just to know where you are on that helps that emotional registry preparing for a baby I was just thinking it'd be really

amazing on your emotional registry to go into the baby stage with a mantra like to literally have a mantra prepared for yourself yes and practice it before you need it like have it as an alarm and you're gonna read it maybe when you're pregnant or you're not even pregnant yet you're thinking I don't really even need this Mantra yet but we need to practice things when we don't need them to access them when we do so it could be any

Mantra right but I'll give a few this feels hard because it is hard it's okay that I'm not enjoying this part of Parenthood my connection with my baby right now is not predictive of my connection with my child later in life I really means the baby stage was so hard for me I know I've told you this every day at like 4 pm and I live in New York City and I had all my kids kind of like

during the fall so by the time it was like September or no October November like 4 pm gets like dark and it's that time of the day and you're like in between I would just like cry every day I really would and I'd be like I don't even really know what I'm crying about but I know it didn't feel great and I don't cry at 4 P.M now and at 4 pm I wasn't in the oh I'm just loving

motherhood but telling myself the way I feel right now it's not predictive of how I'll feel down the road it's also not predictive of how I'll feel tomorrow morning it's really not yes so reminding yourself I'm allowed to feel what I'm feeling how I'm feeling now isn't going to last and it's also not a barometer of how good of a parent I am that's so key to go in with that okay a couple other solves when it comes to a baby

we don't have to stop babies crying we don't have to have any tricks to get them to be calm the single most powerful tool is our calm presence during our child's distress I'm gonna I'm gonna kind of say that again because you need to and it's amazing yeah and it's like kind of one of those things sometimes like the simplest words are also it's like the most complicated concept when our kids are crying when our kids are distressed

the most powerful tool we have is our calm presence why and then what does that really look like calm presence because I feel like we got to be concrete about that when our child is really crying a baby and you don't even know why we have to assume something's upsetting them and they can't regulate it the feeling in their body is overpowering their ability to regulate that feeling yes and what's kind of An Inconvenient reality is that

kids come into the world fully able to feel and not at all able to regulate and I just think growing up is trying to close that Gap as much as possible so they feel everything they're hungry they're uncomfortable they need their diaper change they have gas Whatever It Is We're Not Gonna Know assume it's something real and remind yourself what's my most powerful tool keeping my body calm because our kids feel our energy and they feel

whether we are able to stay grounded when they can't and when we are that's literally the foundation for them to learn regulation there's literally like a three words I'd put in an arrow dysregulation which is a very fancy word for crying melting down right just being all over the place that comes first for a child how do they get to the last part which is learning to regulate through something called co-regulation which is literally the process where I can't stay

calm but my parent can and for everyone right now to imagine our kid is absorbing our calm and what that really says to them is this feeling that feels so overwhelming to me must be manageable because my parent isn't thrown off my parent isn't scared of it so what does that really look like practicing deep breaths that should definitely be on everyone's emotional registry it sounds like BS yeah how many times can I hear about a deep breath

it's really a thing yeah like really deep breathing into your diaphragm I'll model it here out slowly something I practiced a lot of before I came before I became a parent and I've taught my kid is to really imagine a deep breath as if you're breathing in slowly like smelling a delicious cup of hot chocolate okay and breathing out like you have a straw but you don't want to breathe out so fast that you'd like blow the marshmallows but if you had a

straw it'd be very slow because it's a trick when we can do an out breath that's slower than our in-breath we activate our parasympathetic nervous system which is our calm down system it's the opposite of the type of fight or flight breathing we do which is like this right right so just making your mouth like a straw right tricks your body and going out very very slowly after you've calmed your body you can access words and a tone like this

I'm here uh I'm right with you I love these words and again they're so simple for babies something doesn't feel good I believe you I'm right here with you I really mean it none of us are mind readers I never knew most of the time what was upsetting my child but if when changing a diaper when putting in a stroller I could say first I take that deep breath Becky and then I say something doesn't feel

good I believe you I'm right here with you I am literally building probably the most important skill a child will ever learn which is the skill of emotion regulation yes and and I always feel like when I Center myself I'm just I show it better it is this kind of paradox the less attached we are to our kid calming down and more focused we are and just keeping ourselves calm actually the faster a baby does come down because

they feel that sturdiness from us at every single age we understand intention and the idea of someone respecting us at every age starting from birth at every age best thing about it because we've talked about you know how hard it is how you know difficult it is all of the upsides because it is worth it and even these feelings that you have they don't last but they will come they do come I think that's right look and

one of you know to me one of the best upsides that I also think is not often talked about is I really think that if we go into parenting with kind of an open mind everything in this our kids teach us way more than we teach them if we dedicate ourselves we heal things we find new parts of ourselves we find our capability we've become more compassionate with ourselves when we notice wow I'm so hard on myself why

where did that come from how can I shift that and then we can give that to our kids and you watch your kids grow and you watch yourselves grow and that's that's like the best feeling ever thanks for listening to share a story or ask me a question go to goodinside.com podcast you could also write me at podcast@goodinside.com parenting is the hardest and most important job in the world and parents deserve resources and

support so they feel empowered confident and connected I'm so excited to share good inside membership the first platform that brings together content and experts you trust with a global community of like valued parents it's totally game changing good inside with Dr Becky is produced by Jesse Baker and Eric Newsom at magnificent noise our production staff includes Sabrina farhi Julia Nat and

Kristen Mueller I would also like to thank Erica belski Mary Panico Jill Cromwell Wang Ashley Valenzuela and the rest of the good inside team and One Last Thing Before I Let You Go let's end by placing our hands on our hearts and reminding ourselves even as I struggle and even as I have a hard time on the outside I remain good inside