

How to create more time by taking care of yourself

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SUMMARY

Sara, an American living in Italy, shares her parenting journey and experiences growing up in a family with limited emotional communication. She discusses the challenges of pandemic parenting, her struggles with self-judgment, and the importance of learning to ask for help while navigating her own needs as a mother.

- Sara reflects on her upbringing, highlighting a lack of emotional support and communication in her family.*
- She experienced isolation during the pandemic while adjusting to motherhood, which intensified her feelings of frustration and anger.*
- Joining parenting workshops helped her recognize triggers and develop strategies for emotional regulation.*
- Journaling became a vital tool for Sara, allowing her to process thoughts and feelings, leading to greater self-awareness.*
- She learned to prioritize her needs and found that dedicating time to herself improved her parenting and overall well-being.*
- Sara emphasizes the importance of repairing relationships with her children after conflicts and fostering open communication about feelings.*
- She encourages parents to explore different methods of self-care and emotional processing, from journaling to setting boundaries with distractions.*

[Music] hello and welcome to the your parenting Mojo podcast and today we are here with special guest Sara who is coming to us all the way from Italy I think welcome Sarah can you tell us a little bit about who you are and who your family is sure uh yes I am joining you from uh from Italy so um my name is Sarah I am American I grew up in New Orleans but I

moved to Italy about 12 years ago to do a master's program in food studies um and I have stuck around ever since uh I met my husband um doing the same program uh who is from Florence and we ended up uh through a series of various Employments and moving around the country um settling near his family uh where we now have our two young sons who are five and three years old um so we both work in uh sort of the Spheres of

of food and education and sustainability and tourism where those all sort of interlap and overlap um and yeah that's who I am nice I I have been to Florence once it was uh we it was a delayed flight because I got to the airport and I got checked into the plane and we were actually on the gang way and I thought I I'm going to throw up in the next 24 hours it turns out if you say that to

the airline they are actually quite willing to rebook you for free on the next day's flight So I went home and threw up it felt a lot better I'm sorry and course you're welcome back yes thank you yes it it was a shorter shorter trip than planned but what I saw was lovely so um awesome so uh so we have been working together for a little while now and I wonder if you can take us back even further than that

right into what was your life like growing up right what was what was family life like for you sure um so I uh like I I'm sure most people thought that I had sort of the the typical average normal sort of a family relationship uh you know sort of very much you know one younger sibling um you know two parents who are married um living in the United States uh and so my experience was like like I said uh

what what was my normal um my family was very small so it was just um really the four of us in the nuclear family on each set of the family we have one Uncle who wasn't super present in our lives um so not a lot of extended family not a lot of cousins or anything like that um and then even in terms of you know socialization and things like that my my parents were not super social people so

they didn't have a lot of adult Friends With Kids obviously you know we went to school so we had friends from school and would you know have sleepovers and and have interactions in that way but um you know growing up my impression of my family was sort of of just what I thought family was which was um probably again to a lot of people who can relate to typical 80s 90s parenting style um being raised by baby boomer parents so

not a lot of talk about emotions or feelings um you know um spankings were uh accepted sort of a way of you know sort of responding to back talk and sarcasm and um you know just when when kids were not doing what their parents wanted them to do uh kinds of things so um yeah uh I I think uh like I say just um not not a very close relationship and

um not really a great model for emotional regulation um so typically a lot of fights and and you know as I got older and you know started to see more representation and talk to people more and started to travel and you know as As I Grew to be an adult I realized that there were maybe some things that were maybe not part of the average family where um maybe fights would get physical it wasn't just you know spanking a

smaller child but then that turning into well the smaller child being able to react uh and and push and shove or um you know insults and name calling that maybe other families didn't see as normal you know when I would say that my parents might call each other certain things or they would call me certain things and my friends would say but that's that's not really okay you know that right it's was like oh well if you say so so that was sort

of my typical upbringing yeah and did your parents have similar Styles or were they different in some way I think that my dad was um in some ways more supportive I remember him being the one to sort of bring us to sporting events that we were participating in for school over the weekends and things like that um but uh you know they both were were present for us in certain different ways my dad was maybe a bit more just sort of laid-back

um when it came to dealing with feelings he didn't really um necessarily criticize or dismiss our emotions but he didn't really try to get any deeper conversations going on with us um in terms of the way you know we were feeling we didn't have a really open Communication in our family um my mother was a bit more I think dismissive or disapproving um of anything that was tough um from a parenting point of view so I you know have some memories of

talking about times when I was disappointed with something the way that something went at school or not getting a part in the school play or something like that uh as a kid and being told like well maybe you just weren't as good as you think you were or maybe like you know like somebody else deserved it more than you did or you know you know uh or you know you don't have anything to be upset about you have you know you're

lucky that you were able to go to this good school you know sort of things like that um and I kind of always had a feeling that um I I don't know uh I don't know if it was M my sister and I both or maybe I feel it more for myself were not necessarily what she was expecting when she became a parent um whether that was who I was an individual in terms of temperament or personality

or just you know the whole gig of parenting um I kind of had the feeling sometimes that uh we were maybe a bit of a burden or too much work that she wasn't necessarily uh excited or uh to take on or S had signed up for yeah and that must have had a pretty significant effect on you right I mean we're we're constantly sending these messages out to our parents am I lovable and the message you're getting back is

um maybe right sure yeah um yeah the the idea of you know the family that comes together after a conflict that you see on like sitcoms and like everybody hugs and you know it's like it's okay we work through it I love you anyway it was more just sort of like I guess I'll figure out a way to deal with this on my own and that was mainly just sort of I guess I'll go to my room and read a bunch of

books and sort of isolate that way yeah now you're reminding me of myself I did very similar things it was very helpful um and so you know at some point you became a parent and you have Pandemic parentage with young kids for a while and we've been working together for what it's been eight or nine months now um and so I'm curious about you know what was parenting like up to that point

were there things that you were really enjoying that were going well were the things that were difficult sure um well I have to say I think that I was always somebody who who because of my upbringing never really saw myself becoming a parent necessarily or saw that as you know that's the path that my life is going to take um and it probably wasn't until I was with my current husband and saw um you know the

way his family kind of interacted and what I saw as a much more sort of close and positive model of you know oh siblings who want to talk to each other like parents and children who talk regularly and it's not just because they're Italian that he called his mom twice a day it's because they actually talk about things um and so you know I really kind of saw myself having that part of my life for the first time

and so um it was uh not an immediate path to Parenthood but we um you know we had our our two kids we had our first son in uh 2019 um and uh so he was about a year a little over a year old when um all of the pandemic started um and after um after that I um was pregnant with my my second son who was born at the end of 2020 so they're about two years apart in

age um and so that entire sort of pregnancy and child birth was occurring um through the pandemic so we I personally was already kind of isolated in my introduction to becoming a mother because we had just moved to Florence um basically you know as I got pregnant wanting to have a support structure nearby um previously lived in other parts of Italy where you know we both worked so had a sort of social social support there whereas Florence is his

hometown so he's got people here um and then it was sort of just like well I can't really go out and meet people anyway um because I am with a young child so I'm essentially you know on maternity leave or pregnant or on lockdown um which was very very harsh here in Italy in 2020 and 21 um so it was certainly um an isolating sort of introduction to all of that um not having having as I said just contacts

nearby or even a lot of close friends who had you know become parents I I wasn't particularly a young mother but I still um didn't have a lot of people in my life that I knew who had children already yeah and so gosh I mean so many people struggled through pandemic parenting right and and I think we found anger that we didn't know that we had before did that happen for you during that period um it certainly was a lot of

yeah frustration um and anger I guess kind of could be rolled into it um into um yeah I guess not um I I felt like I was maybe just in over my head you know it was like I was trying to figuring out what being a mother meant period and then what being a mother in a culture that was not the culture of my origin was um and sort of trying to navigate that and not necessarily always going with what

seemed to be you know expected or normal in that culture uh and then you know on one hand we were quite lucky during the pandemic because we do have um my husband's family so um his his sister um and her family and his parents uh very close by so we were able to have you know at least a little bit of a bubble of of interaction even even in the strictest of lockdowns um and of course

that was amazingly helpful when we had um you know a very young child as well but it was uh also sometimes again like I say um not necessarily getting the the type of help that I thought that I would get um from from them or uh not knowing how to ask for help and so um you know as a lot of people went through with the pandemic a lot of frustration of just not being able to maybe access resources

or or know where to turn yeah and and I'm thinking back to a a coaching session that you and your partner and I did recently where he mentioned that you hold other people to a high standard you hold yourself to an even higher standard and so when you are trying to be the best parent you can be under these very difficult circumstances I'm imagining there's some place for difficulty is that right sure yeah I think well another thing that um to even

go a little bit pre pandemic when my son was even before a year old um was I I I think that I wasn't necessarily getting the support that I needed at that point and so then when everything got even more difficult it was sort of just building um I can think back to uh you know the summer when my first son was maybe seven or eight months old and just being exhausted um because my husband also works in tourism so summer in Italy

is peak season for him and um I was breastfeeding so um you know the the food came from me um so uh there was just a lot lot of just exhaustion and uh you know I remember we were sort of doing the default uh family vacation that like his family has always done and just me going along with it and realizing that just this wasn't working and nobody was adapting to a very small child being there and he was still in a

very you know now I've learned healthy way expressing his needs he needed time alone he wanted to have some time to swim he wanted to do some things and I was just sort of holding it all inside that well I have needs too and I need you to take this child and put him to bed because I can't anymore um you know for the 7th month in a row um and uh you know just having a big sort of breakdown

in terms of that and trying to you know do cry it out even though they felt bad to do that and even though his parents were sort of like what what are you doing what is going on and it was sort of just like I I never had the realization that maybe I could ask them to interrupt their dinner and maybe go be with my son and stay with him while I had one adult dinner and one adult

conversation um you know kind of a thing uh it was just nope it's me and I have to do it and if I'm not able to do it then this is a technique that I read about and let me try it and uh it felt really bad to do and you know it it wasn't the solution the solution was to reach out and find that help um and so yeah like I say um now I've now I've

babbled a lot and gotten off topic but um finding a way to ask and ask for my needs and and meet that and then not necessarily getting that met because maybe I wasn't being clear about it or I didn't know how to ask for it um was certainly something that you know as we as we went through then even more limited resources built up a bit and uh brought me to you know the membership here and learning learning new

tools yeah and so you signed up for the parenting membership first uh but you knew about taming your triggers so I guess I'm curious uh why did you hop into the parenting membership first so I had been listening to a lot of parenting podcasts of a of a of several different flavors um just trying to figure it out like I say I didn't really know who to turn for you know I didn't have any in-laws with with

kids I didn't have a support network in Italy I didn't even have a lot of friends back home that I could talk with about like where do you get these resources from and I didn't have a great model from my parents so um the the internet that's the joke with my parents or with my husband is that when he wants to know something he asks his mom and I ask Google um so I was seeking out lots

of different views on certain things and as that went on I sort of started to Vibe with some more than others um so yours was a podcast that I listen to quite a bit and I heard the um sort of the announcement that The Taming your triggers Workshop was going to open last year so February of 2023 and I remember saying like that's what I need I'm overwhelmed with work I'm overwhelmed with kids like the you

know why do you find yourself you know snapping in Anger um in situations that you know you should be able to sort of manage in a better way and uh I did not sign up then because I there were a few things I think I have trouble also you know valuing myself and saying that I should spend this money on myself um or making the time for it and saying I'm not sure that I'm going to that you know

the the high standards I'm not sure I'm going to achieve the peak goal of this so maybe I shouldn't even sign up you know you can't you can't fail if you don't try uh was my opinion so it was always in the back of my head uh and then uh a couple months after that the um the guided um setting setting loving limits Workshop opened and I I jumped on that um because it seemed a bit more

something that I could handle at the time and it just took some of the things that I was was hearing in the podcast to a much more um level that I could implement it and I realized like steps that I could take and I saw positive results from that and from that I joined the parenting membership so when the Tim year triggers Workshop opened up again um was it in September or October um I basically signed up the first day it was

possible because I I knew that I had seen that what I had been able to implement from sort of the the work with the parenting membership um meant that I I was ready for it and the schedule just worked out with my my work life as well I decided that I needed to take a step back I didn't need to have three sort of freelance style jobs that two was fine so I had some time available and uh it

was a good investment in myself yeah and so I'm curious about what kinds of things you were being triggered by at the time that led you to think okay this this is really something that I think I need and that will help sure um so one of the the first steps in the workshop is to sort of keep a journal and notice what that is and uh you know I was you know filling up a page or two about it and I realized that

they were all variations on a couple of themes um one of the big ones was what I then put under the umbrella of parenting with an audience so whether that was um in extended family situations and having you know in-laws um you know sort of watching my child have a tantrum or uh a fight breakout between cousins and you know not knowing how to handle it or a situation on the playground where I'm trying to ask my son to please stop

going up the slide when there is a line of kids who want to come down and once you do get to the top and are coming down please wait for the tiny child at the bottom to be off so you don't kick them um and you know um thinking that people were observing me and judging me and um you know falling into some patterns um that I think I had in my family of life like you know make a big

reaction make a big show of disciplining or you know recommending your child to show that like you know you don't want them to be out of control but knowing that that when I was the child in that situation that didn't feel good and that didn't help me to change my behavior it only made me feel resentful towards my parents um and you know it wasn't working with my kids because it doesn't work um so uh but but it was it was a

reaction that I had because otherwise you know people would think that I wasn't trying um so parenting with an audience was a big one um I think another one that I had was um that that seemed to taper out a little bit more as my experience with the the parenting membership went on was a bit of just sort of physical fighting with my kids too um I have always been my husband and I have both been a bit more protective

of our younger son he um is very small for his age um and we're not really sure why but he's he's healthy but he's just very very small for his age and um we've had a few health scares with him in my pregnancy and you know when he was a very young child um and so the idea of him getting hurt I think really kind of makes us feel on edge so you know if you hear from another room like a toy being

thrown onto a ground or you know somebody falling or someone hitting someone you know while you're stirring a pot of course you run out and you're like to the older kid what have you done why are you doing this you know why can't you just be better you know why can't you realize um and all of that and then I think the third one was sort of what I would say would be my my own self judgment um what

I called sort of the shame spiral when um I would try to implement tools from from the parenting membership or things that I had researched and and trying to be calm and it didn't work right away and I had the intellectual knowledge of you know but studies show that these techniques work so I did this two times why hasn't has it had an imp impact yet uh and uh you know losing patience with myself I've always been somebody who's

been in a rush and um not really been good at waiting for the process to take its natural course so myself for when when it didn't work the way it should have in theory the first one two or three times yeah and our culture kind of encourages that right that if you just know the thing you're supposed to do differently then you should just be able to do it this is not that hard and in actuality it tends to often

not be the case yeah and um I I remember another conversation that we' had in the past in terms of um you know different ways to meet needs um I a mantra that I've had to develop is plan for it to not go according to plan and then you won't be slow you know upset when it doesn't yeah yeah and have a plan for what happens when that happens right so that you can still come back and and get your needs met so yeah

yeah um okay and so so you joined Tam triggers the first day happened so you were super Keen to get started what was it like to get started what was what was that like I think my introduction to the course was was nice because I had already had an introduction to um Circle so the online community um that we use in the parenting membership as well um and uh I'm also somebody who really likes to like you know read all the fine

print of everything so um I felt like I was really aware of what I was signing up for and getting into um and so um it was pretty quick I think to jump in uh you'll make it very easy with sort of the introductory sort of process of you know introducing yourself finding um you know people in a group that you can you know then have the the account to buddy bond with and you know like small groups

um and uh you know the the sort of you know I call them the homework assignments the sort of journaling prompts and reflection pieces to think about um so I think the introduction to it was very smooth um in general the idea of the whole learning in community was something that was kind of new to me just as a person who has been kind of like socially isolated by uh you know circumstance or or temperament um you

know from a lot of My Life um but I have seen that it's nice you know you have a lot of options in terms of how to reach out to people whether you want to talk to people directly if you want to just use more of the the online chat with the the circle and and Message Board sort of features so um it was nice to have a few different ways to be introduced yeah and so you matched up

with two accounter buddies I think and what we try very hard to make it not like PE class at middle school so that nobody is the last person picked and we're helping the matches along rather than sort of leaving everybody to the Wolves to try and figure it out themselves so so once you match what was what was that like for you yeah so I mean and a lot of it was just based on like I was surprised how

International it was and you know there was there was a lot of math involved in finding aab buddies of okay I'm available at this time so what time would that be okay um but yeah so um I matched with with two women and um one we ended up uh realizing that our schedules were surprisingly more hectic than we thought we would be the we were like okay we have these windows that'll work and then well actually you're running your own

business and I forgot that this program that I teach at school that's supposed to be on these days has occasional field trips on third days and my kid is sick out of school so we ended up um chatting a lot more on every form available so sometimes we would direct message on Circle um sometimes we would have a quick call sometimes we would just WhatsApp each other and then um another woman who I matched with um who has a

son uh about the same age as my my younger son we ended up um managed to have a bit more of a regular um schedule because of the time that we would you know drop our kids off on the in the morning and a day that I almost never um would have um lessons that I had to teach so um we had a pretty regular sort of one-hour chat almost every week so that was a nice regularity and Rhythm to

check in with yeah and I'm curious as to where they are because I think one thing that folks who are not in the workshop or haven't been through the workshop uh don't necessarily get is it's like well I'm in this weird time zone there's going to be nobody else in my time zone so how is this going to work and and what people I think don't is that it doesn't matter what time zone you're in because somebody else is going to have

some weird availability in their day that happens to match with your day so how did that work for you yeah well I I did it did work out for me um so I I'm in Florence so I had one woman who was in my time zone um who was in Switzerland and the other who was in um Northern Ireland so just one hour behind Okay um but yeah there were there was a potential match with somebody

where who would have been available in the mornings in the US which was the evenings for me um kind of a thing and then with Australians as well um I'm in um I'm in a um an action group in the the parenting membership where we have somebody on uh West Coast us time somebody in central us time Central European Time and Western Australia and it somehow works out so the magic happens yeah and so so without obviously telling us anything uh

confidential in those conversations I wonder if you can give us a flavor of some of the things that you would talk about with this person that you have no idea who they were before yeah so um I think we both um went um pretty much Allin where we were like you know we know that this is going to be talking about some pretty emotional issues so let's go for it and um you know as mentioned before you know every week

There's sort of the the sort of theme that you're sort of working on and there's some prompts that you can talk about um so sometimes we would sort of try to use those and work off of that sometimes it was more of just a natural kind of conversation that came out of things that we came up with um in the material and how we were making some sort of not necessarily super obvious at first glance connections to things that

were happening in our lives you know both as children but also as adults um you know one thing that came up was a lot of just sort of processing you know your relationship with your parents as a child and how you view them and how they are you know your source of authority and your view on you know that's that's these adults know everything and as you get older realizing oh they had you know really fla relationships in their

marital situations or you know they had um you know not maybe necessarily healthy views on on parenting that you know they were expressing with us and maybe that's because that's how they were parented and um you know these are patterns that we do or don't want to repeat um and you know sometimes even some of that bumping up with you know really existential things of like you know our parents parents are re reaching a certain age and you know do we want to

try to be a part of you know that repair with them do we feel like that's even possible at this point are there you know health concerns that maybe are limiting that um are there things that you know maybe we wish we had said that we don't have the chance to say anymore um so there were a lot of really emotional conversations with that that was nice to process with with another person and not and not do

alone yeah and so it's it tends to not just be about the knowledge right because you you could have thought through all that yourself sure but you know you know you hear these things echoed back to you or you know you have a thought in your head and you hear somebody else say it and even if it's just in a slightly different voice you feel very seen and understood and heard and getting a little emotional even thinking about it

now yeah yeah yeah definitely and so I know you you really went all in on journaling during taming your triggers and so I'm wondering if you can tell us what that was like for you why you decided to do that how what how was it a big deal for you right what what was some of the really big shifts that you made over the course of the workshop um so um I'll I'll try to I'll try to give it

a very brief backstory to why I thought journaling was important but I have a very very I have a brain that doesn't turn off I have sleep and insomnia problems because I I just can't stop thinking about things and so uh you know it's something you've heard before is like if you can't you know sleep at night write it down try to get it out so that you can then just sort of turn it off and and sleep so I um you know even

through the parenting membership the early phases of it I would say I'd have these Revelations I'd be like that's an amazing thought I'm going to remember that and I didn't um and so I realiz realized that you know part of why my brain was so busy was I was constantly trying to recall these things or I was having these thoughts over and over as opposed to just writing them down um and I would write them down on the backs of

calendar pages and scraps of paper and I would remember that they put that one on the printer and I put that one on top of the filing cabinet and that's on the kitchen table and oh wait we clean the kitchen table and I said I need to go and buy an organized place to keep all of these thoughts um and so it was um you know a long time coming that I needed to have something that I could

regularly find and refer back to um to to go through that so um you know the first journal entry in the the hot pink journal that I bought was you know my list of potential triggers but I use it also for prompts in the parenting membership and then I have arrows and being like go back to this page and I'm making all of these connections that now that I have it in a physical visual format which is how I learn um I'm able

to see things differently and I'm able to organize my thoughts in a much more productive way and I find myself having less constantly running you know conversations in my head during the day as well wow that's a pretty big change right really helpful it's really helpful to get it out on paper so that I don't have to be remember that remember that remember that right yeah okay and so we talk a lot in the workshop about your window of

Tolerance right the idea that you um you're you're operating within this certain window and when you get pushed outside that window then some sort of explosion or shutdown happens and so did you was it helpful to learn that how did you apply that to your situation those are you know these things that seem so simple once you have them explained to you but um you know I didn't realize that half the time I was

just um you know I I call it parenting while I was already flooded like like I I would walk into a situation and I was just ready to be triggered because uh I just you know I had all these running thoughts and it was just something else that would set me off like one more thing that I have to do or one more thing that I have to remember or one more thing that I have to respond to

even though it wasn't something that needed an immediate response but you know we're also kind of conditioned to this by like our notifications on our phone going off and this and that and things asking for our attention so um something I simultaneously did while journaling I learned how to turn off the little notification bubbles on my phone or I you know turned on the do not disturb settings and things like that so um one of the things that I realized was

a big um you know sort of I guess pre prerequisite ear pre disposition for me being triggered was was these feelings of being flooded um you know was just feeling like overwhelmed with uh you know I have to you know grade this assignment for the class that I teach and the woman I'm that I'm an assistant for is asking if I've you know sent this form yet or you know replied to this email yet and uh my

kid is asking me if I want to play a game with him and I do want to play a game with him but I also want to make them a home-cooked dinner and I have to defrost this for tomorrow night and um you know did my husband move the folded clothes so they're not going to knock them over and just you know all of this happening at once um was leading to me just snapping to them or you know

pushing off spending dedicated time with them and you know sort of disregarding their needs for connection and their you know what I what I came to see as later as you know completely appropriate ways of asking me to fulfill their needs and uh you know when they were being brushed off of course then they would react in a way that was you know to get my attention in another way of you know pushing their brother or yelling or um

coming in and knocking things over because their completely appropriate bids for attention hadn't been responded to because I was distracted with my own things so this parenting at a high stress level was setting me up to fail yeah okay and you also mentioned earlier um the idea of you know being judged parenting parenting with an audience I guess um where what kind of shift did you make in that regard um I um so one of the the units to in

the membership was you know thinking about your values and thinking about what's important to you and um I I can't remember at what step but it was something I think that came up through with the The Taming your triggers um was I think just learning to I don't know I guess it was thinking what's the worst that can happen and taking a step back and wondering why I was caring so much about what certain people thought of me um or if I wasn't

doing things according to their expectation and realizing that that was adding more stress that wasn't leading to any positive outcomes so um you know in a certain way just learning to care less about what people's expectations were and also realizing that they probably didn't necessarily have the expectations that I thought they did you know these were things that I was probably um you know externalizing from my own self-judgment um and you know especially in the case of playground

things you know you don't want your kid to be rough with anybody or hurt anybody but if they have a bit of a tantrum for a couple minutes nobody's going home and talking about that with their family at dinner and you

know nobody's whispering and pointing at me they don't they have their own running dialogue going on and um you know it's not as big of a deal as I was making it so just being able to just

take that pause and step back and say I don't want to deal with this in the way that I've been dealing with it and you know people aren't judging me and if they are judging me I don't need to care about that that's that's not important to me their opinions aren't important the relationship my kids is important that's the problem yeah yeah and I think it goes back to the idea of perfection right and that there is a perfect way to parent

and that everybody is holding us accountable to it um and that you're holding yourself accountable to that standard highest of all yeah yeah yeah and and especially not even knowing what that means you know you're supposed to hold yourself to this perfect level but do you even necessarily agree with what society says that that is yeah yeah did you learn anything about needs that you have that come up on a regular basis that maybe you hadn't

identified before um I think I definitely learned to so the needs were always there but I wasn't great at identifying them or figuring out how I could meet them myself or asking for help in meeting meeting them um and so I think that I felt that I had to meet them in you know through through these uh socially accepted roles of like mother or you know work employee roles um and if I if

I wasn't able to do that you know if I wasn't you know like creativity is a big one that I had um that I just felt like I wasn't meeting but it didn't feel important enough um and um I started recently um taking a Ceramics class and I have been so much calmer and I'm able to you know what I mean it's because it's I'm I'm setting aside you know a couple hours a week um for myself to do

these things I'm you know physically doing something with their hands I'm having these ideas and I'm putting them into you know practice and I have always been an artsy person but um you know you've talked about this before if it's not something that you can you're making money off of then it's not valuable yeah um but I needed to express myself in that way and I was trying to you know find ways to do that in a way that would

make money but again you know I wasn't uh immediately succeeding at it or having the time to invest in it so I I didn't really pursue it and so I was criticizing myself that way but um finding a way to um meet that need has given me so much more patience than just with my kids because I've realized that a lot of the times when they wanted my attention I'd have this need at the back of my head this unmet need that's been

going on for for a long time and uh you know I was always sort of half distracted by it so I was you know looking at books about you know art or reading things or or trying to do that and I've separated that I've been able to sort of com compartmentalize it into like this is a need that I have I can meet it in this way and oh that need is met I don't have to be thinking about it

in other times when my husband wants to do something or my kids wants to do something like I have the time

for it now I I I never thought that if I set time aside for myself I would gain time I always thought it would be I'm losing time that I already don't have H wow that's uh kind of a miracle right because I mean we I work with so many parents who are like I do not have time

for anything I do not have time for any self-care it is not possible for me to take care of myself because that will just take time away from the three million other things that I'm doing and what you're saying is that it creates time I was just trying to do so much together at once but doing it all so inefficiently I think that that's where that came from if I if I allowed myself to take some

time for myself it was it was done it was opened and closed and then I had other things that I could move on to and it wasn't that I was then getting distracted again and I think a part of it too is I I do admit that I feel like I have a lot of privilege you know there's there's pros and cons to um you know sort of being self-employed um but I do have a you

know the privilege of having a flexibility of you know not having a typical nine-to-five kind of a job so I can sort of make time for myself in moments where maybe other people wouldn't necessarily um find that time as easily but um I definitely do do well with the structure and so sort of um breaking up my time in that way has been a way for me to like I say find pockets of it where I I didn't realize

that I had it before yeah and so I guess I'm curious like how how are things different now I'm sure you're not at this mythical state where you're never triggered anymore if you are feel free to let us know but but uh you know what kind of things are different um I come back to the idea of repair a lot more um I I have a lot more I think like Grace with myself so when I

do see myself um you know reacting in a way that maybe my parents would have reacted or um is not in line with what I want to be doing but it's because I've been triggered or because I'm flooding and I'm I'm I'm able to recognize that and um sometimes I'm able to stop you know create the pause we talk about in traing your triggers and think about like what do I want to do and um I'm

it's just not something that I felt like I was able to really do before that sometimes I still react in the way that I I don't want to I was reading um books to my kids in bed last night and you know we had had a great bedtime we were in bed on time but then we were sitting in bed and they kept talking to each other and talking over me and like pushing down on the book and like

putting the stuffed animals in front of the words to read and I was just like I am getting so frustrated I told you I would read and we're here and we're not reading and this is not what I want to be doing and I'm sorry I'm sorry can I take a breath I'm sorry I said I'd read these books we had the time to read these books they're going to fall asleep 15 minutes later it's fine it's

fine and I you know you know gave them both a hug and I said I'm really sorry that's not the mom I want to be

and I want y'all to also help me to do that you know one is three but the 5-year-old is calling me out on it you know I I say like I want to be a better mom to you but I I'm I'm going to need some help doing it too so you know let me repair

with you and and he appreciates it but also you know remind me tell me what I'm doing right and tell me what I'm doing wrong and he's starting to so it's been really really great it's not the kind of thing that could have ever done with my parents yeah yeah and I mean even just things like talking about feelings right talking about needs seems so different than the way you were raised when my three-year-old says I'm

angry or I'm sad um you know or I'm angry I bite you and he doesn't actually bite us but like I'm like that is so great like you're not you know thank you thank you for you know that's a phrase that I'm trying to say a lot is like you know thank you for telling me that it's really important that you're telling me that let's see what we can do with it you know yeah yeah okay so I I want to leave

parents with this new approach that I'm trying with the the homework for if if they want to if they want to do the homework right if they want to dip their toe in with some mild homework or maybe a little deeper with some medium or if they want to go spicy um and I was curious about whether you have some thoughts on things that you have tried right that to you and not everybody's experience is going to be

the same but to you felt my and yet still helpful medium a little more helpful and maybe even a little bit spicy do you have some practices in mind that parents might be interested in checking out sure um well we're all coming from this from different um culinary backgrounds so yes my mild medium and spicy might be the opposite direction other people um but for me the easiest one to start was the the journaling process because and you know

it's something that I you know again have read about the benefits of and so it was something that I wanted to put in practice um and it was going out and specifically buying a journal and using it getting you know like I say silly colored pens and a hot pink journal but it it I mean I can find it in the mess and um making that just something a regular process so if I have the running

thoughts I'm like I can go find it and write it down so journaling was my uh my suggestion for mild um for medium a big thing that I realized was helping was you know if you can call it compartmentalizing and call it you know whatever it is but sort of um not parenting while already distracted or not parenting while you you know that you're flooded so if you can be able to like I say physically I had to

physically put my phone out of the room um because again if it's a life or death situation it's not going to come in the form of a text message so um you know I don't need to pay that bill this moment it can wait until tonight and the kids are in bed I don't need to respond to you know some work group text right now or the parents group for the school nothing is important right now my kids

want my attention right now it's one last thing to distract me and I can even manage to interact with them and potentially rehearse a dinner um if I can do that and have you know fewer distractions so trying not to parent while distracted um it's another big one U for me that has been very very helpful um but you know was a was a step I definitely had to build up to um and then uh for the the spicy I would say um

you know maybe trying to reconcile a bit more the family of orange and how you want to parent bit um so you know I uh one of the one of the big pieces of taming your triggers is the writing a letter to your mother or another figure that you know kind of fulfilled that role in your life and um I remember my my letter that came out was a bit more angry sounding that I was expecting it

to be but I got a lot of closure out of it that came to it from my self-acceptance it was sort of just I've put into words what the relationship was what was negative what the impacts were for for my life and it would be great if you could repair with me but I I don't think you can I've made attempts at in the past and I just don't think that it's necessarily there but I'm okay with that I'm okay with

that um and I um I've gained something from it which is knowing that I want to be the kind of mom that I can repair with my kids and my kids can expect that from me so um that's that's not that's not a homework assignment that's like a monthlong project um that's extra spicy level five maybe yes yeah there's pepper there's pepper spicy exactly awesome well thank you so much much for for sharing that with us I

think that gives us a variety of different places to to head into this kind of work depending on how much of it people have done already so thank you for for being with us for being on this journey with me um for being willing to to share something of your your story your history and where you are today with us I really appreciate it I'm happy too and I've I've I've had a lot of really positive things come out with it

not not only with my kids but also with my husband too so um um I really appreciate that that I'm I'm glad that I took the time to invest in myself for it and I'm glad that this was something that's available and out there yeah thanks so much Sarah thank [Music] you