

Worried About Your Wife's Fatigue? 4 Causes of Mom Burnout & Practical Ways to Support Her | Episode 30

Hi there. Welcome to the Parenthood and Relationship Podcast. I'm Markella Kaplani, a psychologist, a Parenthood and Relationship Coach, and a fellow parent in the trenches. This podcast is all about helping you, the dads, in feeling appreciated for the role that you play, in reconnecting with your partners and in decoding what she really wants so that you can have a thriving marriage, even in the midst of parenthood, which, let's be real, gets all of us.

[00:00:28] If you want to understand your partner better and build a stronger, more connected relationship, you're in the right place. And moms, don't tune out. This is your space too. We'll unpack the emotional ups and downs of parenthood so that you can also feel seen and understood and maybe even share a few aha moments with your partner.

[00:00:47] So whether you're here to strengthen your bond or just to hang out and chat about this parenthood journey that has us all twisted in knots in the most wonderful ways. I am so glad you're here. Let's get into today's episode.

—

[00:00:59] Hi there. Welcome back to the Parenthood and Relationship podcast. I'm so glad you're here today. And if this is your first time tuning in, a big welcome. I'm Markella Kaplani and I'm here to help you navigate the

twists and turns of parenthood, especially the impact that it has on your relationships, your relationship to yourself, as well as your relationship to your partner. Today's episode dives into a topic that comes up for so many couples and let's be real, it causes a fair share of confusion: why she's feeling so exhausted and what you as the dad as the husband, as the spouse, as the partner can do to ease that load.

[00:01:39] I know that for some of you this can be a big mystery. Maybe you're thinking, but she has help, but I do things, or she's home all day, or we have a cleaner every once in a while. Or, even though it was against my decision, we co sleep so she doesn't have broken sleep. So why does she seem so tired? Or maybe you're noticing other couples who seem to have it harder, and yet they don't look quite as worn out, with an emphasis on look, right? So maybe in passing conversation, everything seems okay, and you're thinking, hey, they don't have as much support. as I think we have, and they seem to be doing fine. If you've had any of these thoughts, you're not alone and there's no judgment here. But today, I do want to dig deeper into what really is happening for her to look behind her exhaustion, because it's really as simple as just being tired.

[00:02:35] It's more than needing another cup of coffee or a quick nap. In fact, this kind of tiredness isn't just physical, it's emotional, it's mental, and it's deeply connected to the roles and expectations that she's carrying. And the truth is when we don't see that side of things, it can lead to a lot of unspoken miscommunication.

[00:02:56] It can lead us to feeling that our expectations of what the experience should have been like are not being met, and this can lead to resentment. So I'm here to help you see beyond the surface and uncover the

root of what she's experiencing so that you can feel closer and understand each other on a whole new level.

[00:03:14] I get it. Everyone's tired. Let's be honest. Parenthood often feels like a never ending marathon, Where the prize is a lukewarm cup of coffee. But today, we're looking past that " I'm so exhausted," kind of feeling. And we want to understand the deeper reasons why she might seem so drained, even If on the outside, it doesn't make a lot of sense to you.

[00:03:38] So stick around, we're going to explore this from both sides with compassion and practical steps to help you connect and support her in ways that make a real difference. And I think you'll find that these insights are not only comforting to her, but they're meaningful to you, too.

[00:03:54] Before moving on to understanding her exhaustion, which is the next part that I want to tackle, I do want to address the elephant in the room. A lot of times, when we get triggered by something, it is because of our own perception and our own interpretation of things. So if you, as the dad and the husband, of a wife who says is tired, get triggered and this bothers you or if you feel that it creates tension because you try to explain all the ways in which She's getting support either from you or from others or a variety of other resources, it is really important to address what's going on for you as well. A lot of times when we enter parenthood, or before we do, we have some ingrained notions about how it's going to be. And a lot of times the men that I see in my work with couples have a very specific image of how parenthood is like, and how motherhood is like.

[00:04:49] Based on the shows that we've seen, we expect this woman who is utterly fulfilled by her role as mother, that this gives her more energy and more drive and more purpose, more meaning. And so all the other things like

the housework and the mental load of all the things that she has to carry- we'll talk about that soon enough- all of these things, they just seem like, Trivial, right? So when you come home and you find that your wife is completely exhausted, whether she's working or she's a stay at home mom, you may be triggered because you may think that, hey, this is not what I signed up for.

[00:05:27] Why isn't she happy? And this could be really painful and hurtful to you because as much as it may sound that, okay, well, it's very convenient that you would want all the things done and a smile on top of that, and a wife who is totally down for everything that's going on, doesn't ask for extra support, and seems to just be happy with everything, I know that it's painful for you as well.

[00:05:50] You may be thinking. Hey, is she not happy with me, with our family, with us, with what we have here? And this is based on an expectation of how she was supposed to be, of how it was supposed to look like, which is an unfounded expectation, by the way. And it's not your fault that you have this unfounded expectation, but it is based on that.

[00:06:13] Your interpretation of her exhaustion could very well be that she is dissatisfied with you and with your family and with your children. And of course this is disappointing and maybe even infuriating. You could be thinking, I'm doing my best to keep up my end of the bargain. Am I not supposed to be the breadwinner?

[00:06:32] Although, thankfully, these kinds of stereotypes are starting to slowly dissipate in most households, men still believe that they have to be the main breadwinner, that this is their role in the family.

[00:06:44] And even in households where the wife is making more money and is the one that is supporting the family, men still do carry that weight that I was supposed to be the one, right? So even if they're okay with it and that's how the family dynamic is working, even the men in these situations sometimes feel that they're somehow not contributing or inferior to other men because they haven't been able to provide.

[00:07:09] So there are a lot of expectations there and it's important to uncover what's going on internally for you. What is your wife's tiredness triggering for you? Identify the feeling. Are you feeling angry with her? Are you feeling resentful to her? Are you disappointed, frustrated?

[00:07:27] And then try to see what is that based on. I'm frustrated because I expected this to be easier and you're making it harder on me with your pouty face and with your exhaustion. And you don't have to say that. It's important for you to process it and allow yourself to understand where it's coming from without judging yourself as harsh or as mean.

[00:07:49] We need to first identify where this is coming from before we can fight it. So before I go on to understanding her exhaustion, it is so, so, so important that you also show compassion to yourself and understand where your resentment or frustration or disappointment may be coming from, and that it's okay that this is happening. It's not your fault. There are certain ideals that have been ingrained in our minds, and it's very hard not to get triggered when we don't see what we expected to see.

[00:08:21] So this is kind of like a little small disclaimer before you are able to understand the next things that I'm going to discuss about how and why she is tired, you need to be able to look deep within and understand why you are

being triggered by this. Because her exhaustion is not necessarily supposed to trigger you.

[00:08:42] There isn't some kind of linear, straightforward formula that would suggest she's exhausted, it's infuriating, right? It wouldn't infuriate everybody. It wouldn't disappoint everybody.

[00:08:53] And so it's important for you to seek out what it is that you need and what it is that her exhaustion may be taking from you. As much as it may seem irrational, it's important for you to do the internal work and recognize it and allow yourself to feel what it is you're feeling before you can get to a point where you can truly get in her shoes and understand her. But let's do that as well.

Understanding Her Exhaustion

[00:09:17] **Markella:** When we talk about exhaustion, it's easy to think of it as just physical tiredness, or needing a bit more sleep. But this kind of tiredness is something that runs deeper. It's a form of weariness that can be mental, emotional, or even societal, showing up in ways that go beyond what a nap or a quick break would fix.

[00:09:38] Even on days when things seem to be smooth on the surface, your wife may be feeling this weight beneath it all. One of the biggest contributors to her exhaustion is what we call the invisible load or the mental load. It's this constant mental checklist that she's carrying: planning, organizing, managing emotions, anticipating everybody's needs. This isn't a load that ever truly goes away, by the way. It's An ongoing responsibility, like an engine running in the background.

[00:10:07] So even if she gets some sleep or downtime, the mental load keeps her energy from fully ever recharging. Imagine a mind that's always on, constantly navigating and thinking ahead to keep things running smoothly.

[00:10:20] It's a type of work that doesn't have an off switch. Sometimes, it may seem like she could just let go. And take things more lightly, but that's easier said than done. Our mind naturally slips into this mode almost like a survival instinct. We're constantly tuned into everyone's needs, what needs to be done, and how we need to hold things together. This kind of mental engagement feels necessary, so it's not something that we can easily turn off.

[00:10:48] Beyond the logistics though, there's also the emotional side. It may help you to see it from this perspective. Mothers often find themselves carrying not only their own emotional burdens, but also those of everyone around them. It's how we have been taught to function as women from birth. We're supposed to be caregivers. We're supposed to hold emotions. We're supposed to be able to manage emotions. And so it's the little things, managing the kids moods. Balancing social expectations, or trying to stay present while feeling stretched thin, that accumulate over time. This emotional output leads to a kind of burnout that simple rest just can't address.

[00:11:30] And there's also the massive role shift since becoming a parent.

[00:11:33] It's what we call matressens, and there is the equivalent for you. It's called patressens, and you can look at my first few episodes. I think matressens is episode one, and patressens is episode four, if I'm not mistaken, but I'm going to link them down below.

[00:11:48] Your partner at this point of her life is trying to balance being a mother, being a wife, and perhaps being a professional all while staying true to herself. It's an identity shift that comes with inner pressures to be enough in each role, which is incredibly taxing.

[00:12:05] On top of all of this, there's often the social pressure to be the perfect mom. Someone who does it all effortlessly, nurtures, works, keeps a spotless home, and maintains a thriving marriage. Even if you don't hold these expectations, even if you are not the one who is pushing this on her their part of cultural landscape. And we navigate this daily, both you and we as women. This pressure can lead her to set high, sometimes totally unrealistic standards for herself, contributing to that feeling of never quite being enough.

[00:12:42] And I get it. You may be thinking, but I tell her that I don't need her to do all these things and I don't expect these from her and I point out when she's trying to be perfect and I let her know where she can let go. But instead of that helping her decompress and let go, it seems to get her even more mad. What's that about?

[00:13:00] And we can get into that and I think I've gotten into it in another episode. I'm going to check it out and link it below.

[00:13:06] The general idea is this: it's important to understand that this pressure doesn't just come from you. I completely get the intention and I completely get how it feels for you that you're thinking, I'm supposed to be the most important person in your life. And I'm telling you this stuff isn't important to me. Why can't you just be okay with that? Why are you still swayed? Why are you still bothered? Why are you still holding all this

weight on your shoulders when I'm telling you I'm here to lift it off? So it may be hurtful to you that this is not enough, right?

[00:13:39] And it's important to recognize that if it's happening for you. But it's not about that. It's something that she's grown up with. She may have grown up with parents who expected her to be perfect in order to be loved. She has grown up in a society where women have to struggle in order to make something of themselves, in order to get equal rights, in order to be seen and heard. She's grown up in a world where she's supposed to be this idealized version of a mom that completely clashes with the idealized version of who she's supposed to be as a professional. She's supposed to be a lot like you, masculine characteristics, right, in order to climb the corporate ladder.

[00:14:18] But she is supposed to be a completely different person, this nurturing, all giving, self sacrificing kind of mom in order to be deemed that she is worthwhile and a good enough mother by society. So, you telling her, that you don't expect any of that from her, while to you, it may seem like it should be enough, and while then a part of you might be feeling, why isn't it enough? Am I not important enough to her? Which is so, so, so important to acknowledge. It's not that she doesn't value you. It's not that she doesn't prioritize you. And it's not that your permission and your support and your holding her in all of this Isn't enough.

[00:15:00] It's really important that you also recognize that this runs deep and it's not something that can just go away. And it's not something that you can talk her out of Do you see what I mean? You can't talk her out of feeling that she needs to be perfect. There are stages that she needs to go through. Some of them she may need to go through by herself, and she may need the support of a professional, but some of them it's important for her to sit in that,

to feel it. Because it's not just about the mind, it's also about the feeling that she's carrying about all of this. And so as a first step, it's important that you don't get triggered when she doesn't seem to let go, even though you keep on reminding her that it's okay to let go. As a second step, it will help immensely if you listen to that pain, if you allow her to stay in that as long as she needs to without being triggered and validate her experience and how hard it must be that she feels that she needs to carry all that reminding her that you're there to lift anything without judgment. And just then as a step three, nudging her, reminding her you're there, reminding her of the support that you want to give her when and if she asks for it. Okay? So that's really important when she asks for the support. So you trying to give her support may feel like you're pushing it on her. And that's why it's having the opposite effect of what you intended. And you're wondering, "Hey, I'm trying to lift things off. I'm trying to let her know that she doesn't need to do all the things. And it's as if she's holding on on purpose."

[00:16:37] Well, No, she's not holding on on purpose, but there are things that she needs to process before she can actually let go and you offering her solutions is invalidating the process that she needs to go through. I hope that helps kind of shine light into what's going on and for you to understand that it's not personal because I want to make sure that you are not hurt in the process because at this point you're hurting one another. And that's not the intention of either of you.

[00:17:05] When we start to see these layers of exhaustion as real and valid, it becomes easier to understand her experience and offer the right kind of support. Validation is crucial because it acknowledges her reality without comparison or judgment. Recognizing her mental and emotional load rather

than minimizing it, Or comparing it to what others go through creates a space where she feels seen and often.

[00:17:33] That is all she really needs from you, knowing that you're there with her through this, whether or not it makes perfect sense to you.

Misunderstandings that Arise

[00:17:42] **Markella:** So now that we've laid out why her exhaustion goes beyond the surface level, I would like for us to talk a little bit about some common misunderstandings that arise from all this. It's completely natural to have moments where you might feel puzzled about her level of fatigue, especially if there's help around or if it seems to you like everything is handled.

[00:18:05] Often partners genuinely want to help but unintentionally end up adding to the tension because of some miscommunications. Let's break down a few of these.

[00:18:15] The first misunderstanding is thinking that her exhaustion would disappear if she could just catch up on sleep. While getting rest is essential, this exhaustion goes deeper.

[00:18:25] It's not just about physical tiredness, it's about a mental and emotional drain like we talked about before that sleep alone cannot fully fix. Imagine having a intense stressful day and at the end of it You're not only tired, but you're like mentally fried. You may have experienced this. You might sleep, but you'd still wake up feeling the weight of it the next day. That's what her exhaustion can feel like.

[00:18:53] And so I'm thinking of this couple that I was working with and they would get into this repetitive fight. This fight would happen again and again. Which was about her not going to sleep.

[00:19:03] So when the baby finally started sleeping at a particular time at night, and they knew for a fact that for the first hour or two, that she would be sleeping straight through and she wouldn't have an interrupted sleep, and because sleep was a very big problem for this family, he would suggest to her that she go to sleep immediately. But instead he would find her in bed next to the baby scrolling through Instagram, or he would know that this is what's happening because he would be receiving reels in his DMS. And so he was thinking I'm being protective of her sleep of her mental state because the sleeplessness is getting to her and it's causing her to be all mentally drained and fuzzy and then it's causing her to be irritable and that then becomes tension in our marriage and in our communication because we can't have a conversation that doesn't end up becoming something full blown and a lot of it, indeed, is because of the sleeplessness. So when we are sleep deprived for a long period of time. And sleep deprivation doesn't necessarily mean that we don't sleep at all at night, but if you're sleeping three to four hours, and those three to four hours are always interrupted, then this is sleep deprivation, if it's happening, even for a day or two, if you look it up, but especially if it's happening for months on end. So you really can't think straight parts of your brain just shut down in order to make up for the fact that you're awake while your body needs sleep. Uh, and of course, emotions are very, very intensified, sleep deprivation, especially when it is chronic, it alters so many things on a hormonal level.

[00:20:45] So he was right in saying that the lack of sleep was part of what was causing the tension between them, but his persistence in suggesting

that she should be going to sleep to her sounded as if he was trying to impose what he thought was right for her to do and it sounded like he was blaming her for everything that was going on in their marriage. And so you can see that there is a big gap between the intention and between each person's understanding of what's happening.

[00:21:15] In this sense, it's really important that if you too are fervently suggesting that she should be going to sleep and that she should be organizing her time better and sleeping when the baby sleeps and offering all of these suggestions, I understand that it comes from a very good place, but it's important for you also to understand that she is probably receiving this as a solution that doesn't take into account her real exhaustion.

[00:21:42] And what happens there? She starts to believe that you don't get her and that you're not even attempting to understand her at a deeper level; that you are dismissing her explanation of "I can't sleep when the baby is napping because there's so many things that are going on that the mental load won't let me fall asleep.

[00:22:01] I cannot sleep if I don't scroll through Instagram a little bit at night because then I feel like I've done nothing for myself and this is all I can do for myself at this point with the exhaustion and I know it's pointless but I need it. And this "You don't get me," this is the biggest part of why we have Our relationships deteriorate, and that's not just marriages, I'm talking about friendships as well.

[00:22:26] So it becomes very vital that we avoid getting into this zone where our partner starts to feel like we don't get them, okay?

[00:22:33] So misunderstanding number two. This is seeing her mental and emotional load as a result of overthinking or being overly sensitive. Right? So, ah, you're very hormonal because you're pregnant or the postpartum dip in the hormones. You might think if she just didn't worry so much or if she let things go, she would feel better. And while there's always value in reducing stress, the invisible load she's carrying isn't something she can just easily turn off. It's like a part of her awareness. She's constantly tuned into her surroundings, the needs of those around her, and the roles that she is juggling. Rather than being a choice or a habit, it's more like a survival mode that her mind slips into, making it hard to just let go. And so with comments like "You're being overly sensitive. I get it. I get it. It's the hormones," or "Oh, come on. Stop overthinking it. It's simpler than that. Let me offer you this simple explanation." Again, you slip into this mode of offering advice and suggestions and support that is not what is needed in the moment.

[00:23:41] All of that is super, super useful. And I know that for you, it feels like, "But I've got something to offer you here. I am in a better state of mind because I'm getting a bit more sleep and you might be resentful for that. But the fact is I can think on my feet a little bit better right now because I don't have all that mental load and I don't have all that sleeplessness and I'm offering you a suggestion. Why aren't you listening to me?" Again, it becomes personal. "Do you not love me? Do you not admire me anymore? Do you not think we're equal partners in this parenthood thing that I am not a good enough parent to give you suggestions?" So then the ego comes into play as well, when it's none of that!

[00:24:20] It's just really important that you take a step back and say, okay, this is step number two or three, but step one is listening to her and allowing

her to feel what it is she's feeling without those interruptions in my mind about what she could just be doing.

[00:24:37] Moving on, a lot of times the go to solution seems to be encouraging her to have more 'me time,' an hour to herself, a night out, or time with friends. And while that can totally help and it's so so nice to have it in mind, it's not a cure-all. So there is a caveat there. Many women find that even after a bit of me time, they come back to the same responsibilities, the same mental load, and the exhaustion hasn't really lifted. To help you visualize this, imagine that you're taking a break from work for a day, but then you come back and now your to do list is not only what you left behind and have to pick up and probably do it in half the time, so double the stress, but there have been things that were added there because your colleagues couldn't pick up what it is that you were doing for you. 'Me Time' can give temporary relief and it's important that you encourage it, but also it doesn't necessarily reset her load the way it might seem.

[00:25:36] So what I'm trying to say here is this: I'm not telling you to stop offering her free time. But what I am saying is that it's fundamental that you check the expectation that's behind that so that if I offer you 'me time' and you come back and then the next day you say that you're exhausted, I do not get puzzled and I do not get frustrated because I thought that, "hey, I gave you me time yesterday. You spent half of your Sunday out with friends and you went and you did your nails midweek, aren't you happy? This is more than you were able to do a month or two months ago when our child was younger and less able to stay with me," blah, blah, blah.

[00:26:20] So it may seem to you like she's ungrateful and that it's never enough what you offer. Hence your frustration. What I am trying to do is help you also understand and be appeased within that it's not that she's

ungrateful to you and that she doesn't recognize your good intention. But if she comes back from an hour or a few hours or a day of 'me time' and is expected to be with a smile on her face, that's When she knows what she's getting into, and when the mental and emotional exhaustion that she's been carrying has been weeks and months on end, I'm not saying that you don't deserve the smile and you don't deserve the positive attitude but what I am saying is that you're probably more likely to get it if you don't consciously or subconsciously throw on her, the expectation that now she's supposed to be rested and she's supposed to shut her mouth and go on with it and at least last for another week until she gets a little bit more me time with a smile on her face because, "Hey, you got to take a break."

[00:27:24] And I know, I know that you are not intentionally thinking that way. But I invite you to think whether sometimes you may have felt like, "Oh my God, she's so ungrateful. Oh, it's never enough for her. She got to do more than she does, but she still seems exhausted. This exhaustion is not just going to go away with a few times where she gets to be alone. A lot of times when women get to be alone, they're doing other work stuff so that they can ease the mental to do list. And so, she's still exhausted. And that might be frustrating to you as well. You may be thinking, but I gave you me time so that you can nap, so that you can rest.

[00:28:04] But you decided to do all these things. You don't get to complain. It was your decision of what you did. Yes, it was her decision because the mental load was obviously weighing her down way more and she wanted to get the laundry done and the dishes done and all the things done so that at least the clutter in the house didn't clutter up her mind.

[00:28:23] She's not going to be less tired. And even if she doesn't do all these things when she comes back all these things are going to be there and

so she's immediately going to be both mentally and physically exhausted because she's going to have to take care of them.

[00:28:35] What's the solution here? Well, Not having the expectation, that's all.

[00:28:40] So you're not supposed to do something more. And I know that this might be a little bit difficult because you are wired to do things, to have solutions, to offer suggestions, to do stuff in order to fix situations. And here I am asking you to not do anything, but to just allow her to be and allow yourself to be. And so I'll let that sink in a little bit. And if you have any questions about it, I'm always available for you to find me on Instagram @Markella.Kaplani or on my email, info@MarkellaKaplani.Com and you can ask me and we can work through this together. As long as the intention is there, we will find a way to make this easier on you as well.

[00:29:25] Lastly, one of the biggest misunderstandings comes from comparing her to others or believing it's just the way she is. You might think of moms you know who seem to manage it all, -SEEM in capitals- or you might wonder If this is simply part of her personality. Maybe you've thought she's always been this way, or other women seem to do fine. They seem to wake up early and they seem to do their gym and to take care of the kids and to go to work and come back and do all the things. And they seem like they're fulfilled and that they're happy or at the very least that they're managing. Why not my wife?

[00:30:02] But these comparisons often overlook the unique challenges that each woman is facing, the inner pressures that she's managing. So like I said before, she could be coming from a household where she as a child had to struggle to maintain love. She might be holding generational trauma that

you're not aware of, that maybe she's not aware of. And it's also her own expectations of herself that come into play. And when exhaustion is seen as just part of her personality, or it's compared to others, who, by the way, we don't have a full picture of, and we don't know how much support they have, we don't understand where it is that they get their own release so the comparison is always unfair.

[00:30:46] It can unintentionally make her feel more isolated and unsupported. You may be thinking, I'm not sharing these comparisons. These, questions are just in my head, but trust me, there are ways that she knows from things that you do or you say that you are comparing her and that you are expecting something different based on either an idea that you have or an image of other moms that you might think are doing better than she is.

[00:31:15] All of these misunderstandings, though often well intentioned, tend to deepen the gap between the both of you. They can lead to miscommunication where she feels invalidated or misunderstood and you feel at a loss trying to solve something that just doesn't seem to have a clear answer, and you feel unheard and unappreciated because she seems to do just about anything except for what it is that you've suggested instead recognizing these misunderstandings and shifting to a new perspective can be a powerful way to support her, help her feel seen, and ultimately bring you closer. By shifting away from these misconceptions, you're not just offering surface level support, you're showing her that you understand the layers of what she's experiencing and that's the type of understanding that can lift a huge weight off of her shoulders.

Offering the Kind of Support She Needs

[00:32:09] **Markella:** And now that we've unpacked why her exhaustion runs deeper than physical tiredness, and we've talked about all the ways in which your well intentioned support may be creating miscommunication and may be creating the opposite effect of what you're really trying to achieve, Now let's talk about how you can support her in a way that truly makes a difference. These aren't surface level fixes, they're meaningful steps that help her feel seen, valued, and supported in ways that go beyond simply giving her a break. Let me tell you this. Some of them may seem like very small gestures, but they can have a profound impact on how she feels on a day to day basis.

[00:32:50] The first way to show up is by listening; really listening. This means creating a space where she feels safe to share her thoughts without fear of judgment or the pressure to be strong and without the fear of you responding in frustration, in anger, and without fearing that she will inadvertently be starting an argument between the two of you.

[00:33:11] Sometimes, all that she needs is a compassionate ear. You don't have to solve every issue she mentions or offer advice. Just being present with simple phrases like, "this sounds tough," "I'm here with you," "I understand that you're feeling X, Y, Z," and just repeating, reflecting back to her what it is that she said can make her feel deeply understood.

[00:33:33] So as a tip, when she starts talking about something that's on her mind, try saying, "tell me more about that." It's a small phrase that invites her to go deeper and it shows her that you're genuinely interested in what she's experiencing. If you feel that nagging feeling that you want to share a suggestion, ask for permission. If you're asking me, I would totally avoid it. But if you just can't shake the feeling, ask at the very least for permission. And if she says, no, this is not the time, allow it to be. And if she says yes,

make sure that your suggestion doesn't hold expectation that this is the end all be all.

[00:34:10] In my practice, as I see couples, I see them both together as well as on an individual basis. And when I am alone with the husbands, the one thing that at some point all of them will be assigned to try with their wives is to do this kind of listening without really responding; having very specific responses, like the ones that I shared with you, and just listening without providing an excuse if they feel like their wife may have said something that makes them seem like they weren't supportive or is an accusation toward them and just listening and saying, "Okay, I'll process this. I'll have a think about what you just said." And they come back to me the next time and they tell me just how much this helped her open up because in the past they would be saying things like, "but she's not opening up. She's not telling me what is wrong. Instead, she's communicating through reels. Uh, she is not explaining to me what's wrong. She avoids the conversation in every way possible. So how is it my fault that we're not communicating?"

[00:35:18] Well, if she is avoiding the communication altogether there must have been This fear created -fear not meaning to make you sound like the bad guy- she may fear that she will create more tension for the both of you, that she will be putting the relationship at risk if she starts to express her thoughts because in the past, maybe there has been some kind of tension, so this tension doesn't have to be yelling and arguing, but it could be the kind of tension that maybe there's a silent treatment or something of the sorts, there's a misunderstanding, there's a bigger gap created. And so instead of taking that risk, she's decided not to talk at all. And this exercise that I just mentioned, -so basically just listening no explanations, no excuses, no pitching in your point of view that can be done at a different time- carving out

time to listen. to her and her concerns and what it is that she wants to share whether that's about you or about motherhood or about anything in her day. And just allowing that to just be her time to speak, it can truly have a profound impact.

[00:36:24] Another powerful way to support her is to step in proactively. It's not about taking everything off her plate, of course, but choosing specific tasks that you can commit to consistently without needing reminders. I'm going to repeat that without needing reminders. For example, if bedtime routines are hectic, take charge of bath time or pick up a household task that you know she often handles. Or maybe if you're not sure what this could be, think about something that she has asked you repeatedly to take over when you've offered. So when you've asked her, "What can I do?" And she's told you, "take a bath time," maybe it's something that really allows her to de stress in that moment where she can just Relax a little bit while you're bathing the children. And so it is going to create real impact if you decide to do it without her having to tell you if you just show Up and say, "okay, it's bath time. I'm taking over." When you take on these tasks without her needing to ask, it removes an extra layer of mental load for her. She can know this is consistent. And even if it's not consistent, it's going to be a nice surprise that she didn't have to ask, that she doesn't feel like she's failing because if she has to ask, it means that she was supposed to be able to do it. And so then it becomes a matter of pride and of ego that get in the way that I feel like too proud to keep on asking you because if you felt like it was important to help me, you would have Done it already, you would have picked up on the fact that I keep on asking you to help me say with the dishes or with the bath time and you would have started to offer to do it yourself and the fact that you aren't means that you don't think that you should be supporting me in this. It means that you don't think that it's something for you

to take on. And I don't want to feel like I'm convincing you and I don't want to feel like, "Oh, you know, she was supposed to be able to carry through all that stuff and she's obviously not doing it. So, okay, let me help her out." Instead of "I'm her partner and I am picking up something that even though I am also tired from my work and the things I do that's what partners do for each other." They share the load, right? They don't help.

[00:38:39] Kind of like you're not babysitting when you take over the kids. It's something that is going on around a lot in social media, so I'm using it as an example. You're not babysitting when you are taking care of the kids and the wife is gone. You are parenting. In that same note, you are not helping with the dishes or helping with bath time. You are sharing. You're taking that part of the responsibility that you can hold, that allows your partner to take a rest and not eventually burn out, okay?

[00:39:12] The tip here is consistency. That's key. When she sees you regularly handling certain responsibilities, it shows that you're thinking ahead with her needs in mind, which can be so incredibly reassuring and definitely allows for the trust to rebuild in the relationship.

[00:39:30] One of the biggest gifts that you can give her though is genuine rest, not just an hour here or there, but a few hours where she doesn't have to be on call or worry about anyone else's needs.

[00:39:41] Let her have a day to sleep in while you take the kids out and there's quiet in the house. Give her some time where she can catch up with friends while not worrying that she has to be close enough or glued to her phone because you may need to call her to find out where the diapers are. Or simply Give her the opportunity to relax without feeling obligated to be productive.

[00:40:02] So, a lot of times you'll hear, Hey, I gave you time, now you can take over that project that you feel so bad about not being able to do. But this will create more guilt if she's decided that that's not what she wants to do in that moment, telling her that I was expecting you to do that because you've been complaining about the fact that you don't have time to start that project, well, this was your time to start the project. Just avoid making a comment altogether about what it is that she's doing with her time. This kind of true rest is often much more rejuvenating than a quick break to get things done.

[00:40:36] So in that note, you could surprise her with these moments of rest, plan ahead, take care of the essentials, and then say, I've got everything covered today. Just take some time for yourself. This intentional act of giving her space to recharge can make a world of a difference. A lot of times it's not about the time. It's not about measurement. It's also about intention if she has to ask for it for half an hour Where she can sit and watch TV while you bathe the children that half an hour is going to be way less rejuvenating than if you tell her that this is your time to just sit here and I will take care of it because I want to do this for you, because in the second scenario, she's not just sitting and watching TV. She's also sitting in a place of peace, knowing she's being taken care of. In the first scenario, she had to take care of herself. She had to demand time for herself. She had to fight for it. And there is this underlying feeling of, didn't I deserve this? Did I have to fight for it? Whereas in the second scenario, it's still half an hour.

[00:41:43] It's still her sitting on the couch watching TV if that's what she wanted to do. But it is also with that peace of mind, that sense of love, knowing that I was taken care of. I didn't have to think of myself at that point. I've been thinking about the kids all day. I've been thinking about what it is that I'll serve for the whole family, for you, for dinner. And now somebody

thought of me, you thought of me. How important is that in the way that she sees you?

[00:42:13] And finally, one of the most supportive things that you can do is build a habit of checking in. Even if life feels busy, making a point to ask her how she's doing and if there's anything weighing on her shows that you're thinking about her well being. Sometimes just knowing that you're attentive to her needs can make her feel so much more supported. So, you can do this by setting a reminder on your phone to check in weekly. It doesn't have to be a formal conversation. It can be even just a quick question like, "how's everything going on for you lately?" And this can let her know that you're tuned in.

[00:42:49] I get it. These may sound like very small actions. And maybe in your mind you're thinking, our relationship is at the brink of breaking, and I don't think that this is easy. And we've been taught that if something is broken, it takes hard work to make it mend. There is some truth to that, but it's not necessarily hard work. What is difficult for us humans is consistency. So what I am here to tell you is that your marriage can thrive without you having to do some massive shift or extreme act to prove your love and win her back. There is no such hack. And it may seem unbelievable that small things like what I suggested make a difference, but what is hard about this and so it is hard, it does take effort is to keep up with all these small things.

[00:43:43] So it could be that you choose, you don't have to do all of them, but it could be that based on what it is that we discussed today you can see that the biggest pain points for your relationship and in your family are the first and the fourth, I don't know.

[00:43:56] So instead of telling yourself that you have to try all of the tips or you have to mind all of the things that I mentioned today, you decide I'm going to mind the number one and number four miscommunication. And here are the suggestions that Markella said that go with those and this is what I'm going to do.

[00:44:12] The hard part is staying consistent and being mindful and making sure that in the times of tension and in the times where you get triggered and you're frustrated, that you don't revert back. That is the difficult part. So you don't have to do some grand gesture, which may also feel like, "I don't know how grand and what would be this grand gesture that I have to do, and so I feel trapped, I feel helpless, that is my relationship going to get better if I don't find something, wow, to do?"

[00:44:42] You don't. You don't have to find that. But you do have to consistently, mind certain things.

[00:44:46] If I were to point out the first thing to start with, if you're in the beginning stages of trying to get your relationship in a better place after parenthood -because parenthood comes and hits the relationship first and foremost, unfortunately, even the healthiest of relationships are going to take a huge hit- if you're in that stage, the one thing that I would tell you to start with, if it seems overwhelming to start with two or three, the one thing, STOP offering suggestions. Don't tell her what to do.

[00:45:14] Just listen to and validate her feelings. That's it. Start with that and you're going to see a difference. I promise you.

[00:45:26] Thank you so much for tuning in today. I hope this episode has given you a fresh perspective on why she might feel exhausted and, more importantly, how you can support her in ways that bring you both closer.

[00:45:39] Remember, this isn't about making huge changes, and it definitely isn't about doing it all at once. It's about small, thoughtful actions that make her feel seen, valued, and supported. These little shifts can go a long way in creating a partnership that's balanced, resilient, and fulfilling for the both of you.

[00:45:59] And if you're ready to take these insights even further, I'd like to invite you to join my reconnect with her challenge. This is a one week experience designed specifically for dads who want to reconnect with their partners in a meaningful way. In this challenge, you'll learn practical tools and insights to help your relationship and make her truly feel supported without having to guess what it is that she needs or wonder how to help. Within this week, we'll focus on simple yet powerful steps that can bring you closer even amidst the demands of parenting. This is your kickstart to enlivening your relationship and creating the foundations to help it thrive. Think of it as an opportunity to build a foundation that supports the both of you. You'll come away with a clear understanding of how to bridge those little gaps that may be keeping you from feeling as close as you'd like. And the best part? These are changes that don't just make her feel more connected, but also, create a stronger, more fulfilling relationship for you, too. If this sounds like the next step you're looking for, head on over to the show notes where you'll find a link with all the details on how to join. Don't wait, give this gift to yourself and your relationship and see for yourself the impact that it can have. I'm so excited to see the difference it will make for both of you.

[00:47:18] Thank you again for being here today. Relationships aren't always easy, but with the right tools and a bit of effort, they can be incredibly rewarding. Here's to building a partnership where both of you feel understood, appreciated, and supported. And again, if you are trying this out and you have feedback for me, or you need a little bit of support, make sure to DM me or email me. I'm right here and I'm cheering you on. I'll see you in the next episode!