

**Sarah:** Hey everyone. Welcome back to another episode of the Peaceful Parenting Podcast. Today, Corey and I discuss an idea we've been thinking about a lot lately and talking to each other about: intensive parenting, the choices we make, and the impossibly high standards we're up against, and how these things affect our mental and physical health as parents and as humans.

After I interviewed Jessica Slice, disability activist and author of the book *Unfit Parent*, who talks about these things and what she's learned from disability culture and being disabled herself, Corey captured all of these complicated ideas about productivity, care, and how we can sometimes drive ourselves too hard as: just because you can.

I'm going to say that again: just because you can doesn't mean you should.

Listen in to our conversation about how this idea can inform the choices we make as parents and how we can make changes to make life feel easier and more connected and fun.

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As we near our five-year podcast anniversary, we really appreciate the support and the love of our listeners.

Here's our conversation.

**Sarah:** Hey Corey, welcome back to the podcast.

**Corey:** Thanks for having me again.

**Sarah:** Do you remember last year when that report came out from the U.S. Surgeon General that said that parents are suffering from intensive parenting?

**Corey:** Yes.

**Sarah:** Yeah, and I think people consider peaceful parenting intensive parenting, right? And we do often say this kind of parenting is a lot of work. It requires a lot of us. But I wouldn't say that it necessarily has to be intensive parenting in all aspects.

**Corey:** I agree so much. I had a lot of mixed feelings when that report came out.

**Sarah:** Yeah, me too. I felt like writing some sort of a defense of peaceful parenting after I heard that.

So let's tease this apart a bit. We started talking about this after I interviewed Jessica Slice. If you all didn't catch that, she is a disability activist, and she talked about disability culture and what it tells us about the impossible standards of parenting, and I guess the impossible standards of parenting in general, not just intensive parenting.

And you said it reminded you of one of your favorite quotes. So tell us your favorite quote, and that's the anchor of our episode today.

**Corey:** One of my favorite quotes, though I'm not even sure if it's technically a quote, is from one of my favorite movies, *Jurassic Park*. I recently actually read the book because I was talking so much about how I love the movie. The big theme is: just because you can doesn't mean you should.

Now, when you and I were talking about this, honestly, we could have a really long conversation about the way they were talking about it in the book, which was maybe questioning science and where we want to take that, but it actually applies really well to parenting.

**Sarah:** Yeah. And the idea that Jessica Slice brought in, and we're going to play a quote about this, is that there were things that she couldn't do as a disabled parent, and she felt a lot of guilt about that.

So let's just take a second and listen to that quote.

**Jessica:** Yeah. I do sometimes feel self-conscious when I see the way my peers parent, when I see them making these perfect little lunches and these divided-up lunch boxes or doing Elf on the Shelf, these kinds of versions of parenting that I just don't have the energy or capacity to have as part of our lives.

And I can feel like, are my kids missing out from this type of parenting? And maybe in some ways they are. Nothing is simple. But I know I would have done those things. The version of me in my twenties would have done those things, but she would've also been a lot less patient. She would've had a lot less time for just sort of wasting hours and being together.

I have an ability to be present with my kids that I wouldn't have had before.

**Sarah:** Okay, so one thing that's interesting to me in that quote is that she talks about how she probably would have done all the things if she could have, like herself when she was in her twenties. She didn't become disabled until she was in her late twenties, and she said the person she was in her twenties probably would've turned into the mom that was trying to be the perfect mom.

The example she used was the little bento box lunchboxes. And just to be fair, if that brings you joy, then that brings you joy, right? The bento box lunches. But if you're doing it because you feel like you should do it, and you can do it, that doesn't mean you should do it.

So what are your thoughts on what she was saying?

**Corey:** This really struck me because I think, gosh, I have made lunches that she would consider the little bento box ones, and not because it made me happy. I did feel like this is what I was supposed to be doing in order to be sending an appropriate lunch for my children because of that pressure.

That really, really stood out to me, and I couldn't help but just feel the weight of all those pressures we are handed as parents. And because, for most of my parenting journey, I have been able-bodied and can do endless amounts, I often find myself doing way more than I should because I feel like that's what I'm supposed to be doing.

And then when you take a step back and you try to question it, you just get crushed by the weight of those expectations of, well, what are the reasonable ones? What should I be doing? What is intensive parenting, and what is taking a step back?

**Sarah:** I think also there's so much value in our culture, and this is one thing that Jessica talks about in her book and in the podcast, is how much of what we do is informed by the values of capitalism. If we don't feel that we're being productive, and what's one more thing? When is it enough? When can you just sit down and rest? Or when do you think, I've got to make those bento box lunches?

Now I am done for the day, and I could go to sleep and get some rest, or I could read or watch a show with my partner or whatever, but I really should. So that's a perfect example of I can, but should I? Where do you draw that line? How do you question yourself about what you should do, what you can do, and what you shouldn't do, even if you could?

**Corey:** Yeah, it's true. And I think every stage that I've been through in parenting, and honestly any stage of life, whether you're a parent or not, you're going to be hit by this list of conflicting advice that's coming at you for what you should be doing.

I typed out a list of what I'm experiencing right now. I have a 7-year-old and a 10-year-old, and right now I'm getting this conflicting stuff coming at me, telling me what I should be doing. And it sounds something to the extent of: you should have your kids in sports because kids are on too many screens and not getting enough exercise, but don't push them too hard because then they won't love movement. Register them in music lessons or get them extra tutoring. They must have a second language, but not too much because after-school activities can drain your children and then they're not getting enough free, unsupervised time. And don't even get me started on food.

With the whole bento box thing, I ended up there because of all the conflicting advice about not letting them have too much of this, but needing to have that, and you don't want to give them an

eating disorder. It's just all of this. How do we find that line of what we should be doing and what is too much?

**Sarah:** I think some of it is asking what actually brings joy. Sometimes it brings joy to you, and sometimes you're willing to do it because it sparks joy in your child. So just looking at the sports thing: does it spark joy in your child to play hockey? Does it spark joy in you to be involved in that? Maybe this is one of those things you do for your kids because it sparks joy in them.

But the whole idea of "you should do it because it's good for kids to be in sports," yes, that's true. It is good for kids to be in sports. But that's a perfect thing of just because you can doesn't mean you should. You've got to look at your own life and how it fits into your life and what your kids want to do and what their interests are.

**Corey:** That's so true. And when you think about what we do when we're coaching, almost always we have this discussion with our clients of, okay, what does your daily schedule look like? What does your week look like? And then we're like, okay, now what can you take out?

We're almost always telling them this message of: just because you can manage all this doesn't mean you should. What of this can you take out so that your life does feel less intense? I think this is something naturally that we do end up spending a lot of time coaching, because everyone does end up finding that they can't find that line for themselves.

**Sarah:** For sure. And there's also the things that people think they need to do. One thing I hear parents talking about is arguments with their kids about putting their laundry away. You know, "I folded all their laundry and put it in their room, and all they have to do is put it in their drawer." And my first thought is always, oh my gosh, why are you folding their laundry?

And I don't mean that in the sense that they should be folding their own laundry. I mean, who cares if the laundry's folded? Maybe that's your own personal thing, that you love a neat drawer, and okay, do that for yourself. But is it worth the battle to get into that with your kid? Plus, when they go and look for things to wear, they're just going to be rooting through the clothes anyway and throwing them on the floor and unfolding them.

Sometimes there are just these shortcuts that people feel really guilty about taking, and they think they're not living up to the North American perfect family standard. Another good example of that is baths every night.

**Corey:** Yes.

**Sarah:** In the summer, maybe your kid needs a bath every day because they've got sunscreen and sand and they're sweaty. But in the winter, at least where we live, it's cold and kids don't get that dirty. A bath a couple of nights a week is totally fine. But parents have this idea, well, shouldn't I do the same thing every night because that's part of the routine? Well, maybe that's good. Maybe that works for you, or maybe you can let it go.

**Corey:** Yes. And I've heard you say this so often too about food. Just because you can make these amazing, crazy meals doesn't mean you should be. It's totally acceptable to be eating scrambled eggs and baby carrots every night.

**Sarah:** Yes, unless it sparks joy for you. And then you might want to do it. And even if it sparks joy sometimes, and you can do it, it doesn't mean you should do it because it might make you too stressed.

There were things that I had to give up when my kids were small that I really liked doing, that did spark joy, and that I could have done, but the tradeoff was too great because it would've made me too tired. So that's another thing. Sometimes there is something that sparks joy that you could do, but then you think about the tradeoff: how is this going to make me show up as a parent? Can I be the parent that I want to be?

An example I'm just thinking of now is I really wanted to homeschool my kids. Philosophically, that was super aligned for me, and I loved the idea of it in theory, of all of us learning together and doing all the things. But when it came down to it, I could have done it, but I decided not to do it because it wasn't letting me show up as the kind of parent that I wanted to be. Being with my kids 24/7 was not good for me. I just thought, I shouldn't do this because it is not making me show up as the kind of parent that I want to be.

**Corey:** Yeah, exactly. I felt the exact same way about homeschooling. Hats off to people who find ways to make it work for themselves. It truly does work for some families. We just have to look at our individual resources, literally and figuratively, and what that is going to look like in practice for our family. And just because you can doesn't mean you should.

**Sarah:** Yes, and please check out our podcast that we did about how I decided to ditch special time.

**Corey:** Yeah.

**Sarah:** Because that's also a really good example of this.

**Corey:** I agree.

**Sarah:** Of course I could do it. I just realized it wasn't working for us, and instead I chose following what made my family feel joyful. We'll put a link to all the episodes we mention in the show notes. So that's a really good one if you want to hear practically how I followed what made my family feel joyful.

**Corey:** Yeah, I love that.

**Sarah:** So we talked about that sort of drive for productivity. The drive for productivity tries to convince us that if we can do something, we should do it—that more and more and more, like we're always striving to get all the things done and check all the things off the to-do list.

One thing that Amanda Diekman talks about—and she’s also been on the podcast; she talks about low-demand parenting, and she had a podcast where she talked about something she learned from what she called her superwoman self. And I think that’s what we’re talking about, like the push, push, go, go, go. “I can do it, I can do it, I can do it.” But can you? And should you?

I’m going to read a quote from her. She says, “I’m newly trying to actively love on my amazing superwoman.” This is us appreciating, not beating ourselves up for that go-go-go part, but appreciating, you know, this has probably gotten me to where I am, and there’s a lot of life squeezed out of having those sorts of impulses to do more. But also it causes what she calls extreme exhaustion.

So she says: “Because it turns out that superwoman holds both my vast trying and my extreme exhaustion. She’s trying to protect me from how very tired I am by hyping me up. But when I make her feel safe and tell her that she can let go, she can slow down, I can see how very tired she is and how long she’s been hustling to keep me safe. She melts into my arms. She’s my most hardworking part, and it turns out she needs a rest too.”

**Corey:** While you were reading that, I got full-body goosebumps.

**Sarah:** Yeah, I love that. So really appreciating that part of us that wants to do more and get stuff done, not villainizing it, but recognizing the good in it and also holding that part of us and recognizing how exhausted it makes us too.

**Corey:** Yes.

**Sarah:** I think there are some things that do exhaust us that we don’t feel we can let go of. I remember I was talking to a client, and she was saying how she was feeling so exhausted and sort of resentful by her 4-year-old’s bedtime routine. She said, “First I help him get his pajamas on and I brush his teeth, and then I read him stories, and then I lie with him, and it’s just so exhausting.”

And I said, “Totally. That does sound exhausting. And you don’t have to do any of it.”

She was like, “What? What do you mean?” I said, “You don’t have to do any of that stuff. You could just let him fall asleep on the couch whenever he falls asleep, without his pajamas on and without brushing his teeth. And you don’t have to lie with him, and you don’t have to read him stories.”

And she was kind of like, “What are you saying?” And I said, “You don’t have to do any of it, but you’re choosing to do it because it’s important to you to do that nurturing in that bedtime routine.”

So I think that’s another thing to think about too, is that when there are things that we’re doing, there’s this sorting mechanism: what am I doing because I feel like I have to do it, when I really could let go of it? What am I doing because the superwoman is driving me to do it because I’m

trying to attain this impossible standard of parenting? And what am I doing that might still be hard, but it's just really important to me?

Maybe it doesn't spark joy. Probably no one's bedtime routine sparks joy, but maybe it's just too important to let go of.

An example of that for me, and I was just reminded of it this morning, is with my daughter. As you know, Maxine is now in college and she doesn't have to be at school every morning at nine the way she used to. But when she was still in school, she had to get up at seven and get out the door by 7:45 to get to school on time.

And I am not a morning person. I may have mentioned that before, but I really hate getting up early. Like, 7:00 a.m. is just way too early for me. But I got up every day of her high school years at 7:00 a.m., and I did with my sons as well.

And all of them were like, "Mom, you don't need to get up. We can get out the door on our own." But I felt like it was supportive to get up, and it was important to me to be supportive of them. If they had to get up early, I wanted to be supportive and get up early with them.

I make Maxine a cup of tea in the morning, and she pretty much gets her own lunch now, but I used to make lunch for them when they were in high school. I was doing it even though it felt intensive to get up early when I didn't have to. But it felt important to me to show up and nurture like that.

**Corey:** Yeah, that makes so much sense. It's interesting—as you were saying that too, I was thinking about how every day when all the kids are getting off the bus, my son used to throw his backpack on the ground. Then instead I started just asking him, "I'll take it."

And now, to this day, he would never throw it now because he's not this tiny little kindergartner who can barely get himself back home again. But I still naturally love that moment of being able to be like, "Hand me your backpack." I don't know, something about it. I take it and I put it on my back, and I feel like I'm letting him know, you can let those weights go for the day.

There are these moments where I'm choosing to do that, and I can, and I'm happy to do it. It's very different than that feeling of resentment as I'm trudging along.

**Sarah:** Yeah. It's something you're choosing to do because that nurturing of taking the load off of him, literally and figuratively, is important to you.

I think the theme we're coming to with "just because you can doesn't mean you should" is looking at what are the outside forces that are making me think that I should do something—cultural forces or capitalist forces or the parents-next-door forces—that are making you feel like you should do something, and really questioning, what is the reason? What's the drive underneath this thing? Is this something that I believe in and something that I can get behind?

And sometimes there may be things that you look at and say, well, maybe I would drop this if it was just up to me, but it sparks joy in my child, or it's a nurturing that I'm choosing to do, or it's a way that I'm choosing to show up. Sometimes you might choose to do something because it does spark joy in your child, even if it doesn't in you. That's something where you have the resources to give them.

So just not taking everything at face value of what a good North American bedtime routine looks like or what the other people are doing. I remember when my kids were little and there was always, are you putting them in soccer? Are you putting them in tennis? And I was like, I'm not putting anyone in anything. Partly because they didn't want to, but partly because I didn't want to. I didn't feel like going to all those practices when people weren't begging me, "Please, please, please, can I join a soccer team?" I'm fine with not doing that stuff.

**Corey:** Yeah, that's so true. This is all reminding me of—please go back and listen to one of my favorite podcast episodes you've ever done—with Michaeleen.

**Sarah:** Oh yeah, yeah.

**Corey:** Did I say her name properly? The *Hunt*, *Gather*, *Parent* one.

**Sarah:** Doucleff.

**Corey:** She's the one I first learned about the idea of North American parents being weird.

**Sarah:** Right.

**Corey:** I can't remember—do you remember what she meant by that?

**Sarah:** That weird is Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic. It's sort of like we have all these ways of parenting that are very much the intensive parenting thing again.

One thing she talks about is having your weekend organized around kid activities, going to the special science center and birthday parties and all that. She really encourages parents to live their lives and involve their kids in their lives. So instead of going to the science center, you might go to Home Depot and your kid helps you get the things you need for the little mini bathroom renovation you're doing, and then they work with you.

Which of course, in itself, is another way things can feel intensive, having a child helper. But she really talks a lot about the benefits of involving your child in your life. One benefit is that they turn out to be good helpers because you've let them help when they want to. But really, it's about living your life as opposed to trying to arrange your life for your child.

**Corey:** Yes. And if I'm honest, I didn't necessarily agree with everything I read in that book, but I think it might be one of the most influential parenting books I've ever read in that it really fundamentally informed how I show up. I just decided that I don't have to do what everyone else is doing.

And I think that's a big theme we're saying here too. Look, if we're peaceful parents, if we're being honest, our listeners are already choosing to parent in a way that's different than a lot of their society around them.

**Sarah:** That's true.

**Corey:** So we're basically saying, now take it a step further. Just keep questioning everything. You don't have to do anything you don't want to.

**Sarah:** Yeah, for sure. Question everything. Is that like a sixties slogan?

**Corey:** I don't know, but I feel like I would've done really well living in the sixties.

**Sarah:** "Question everything." Okay, so another thing that came up from reading Jessica's book and the interview with her was how, if someone is disabled, they often automatically need a level of care that a non-disabled person—and I was going to say doesn't need, but I'm going to change that to doesn't think they need.

Yes, there is often physical care that a disabled person needs that a non-disabled person doesn't need, if they have legs that can walk and so on. But the care part of caring for each other in community is something that Jessica talks about disability culture as being really good at, and that community care that we need to choose is in itself going against the sort of rabid individualism of capitalism that is encouraged around us.

I think that's why so many parents are so uncomfortable with doing things for their kids, because our culture is so hyper-focused on individualism and independence. Like, why should you carry Big C's backpack if he can carry it for himself? Aren't you just coddling him, and he'll never learn to be independent if you carry his backpack for him?

People have probably heard me tell this story before, but I had the same thing with Maxine when she was little, carrying her backpack. And now, when she's 18, she won't let me carry anything. We'll be coming from getting groceries and coming from the car, and she's carrying like five bags of groceries and I'm carrying nothing. I'm like, really? I can carry that. And she's like, "No, Mom, I've got it. Let me carry that for you."

My middle son, the other day, offered to carry my purse for me. I was like, "It's okay. I can carry my purse." He was like, "Mom, do you want me to carry that?" I'm like, "No, it's okay. I can carry it."

I got a little off the tangent there of care and hyper-individualism, but that's one thing that Jessica said non-disabled parents can learn from disability community: that we all actually need care, no matter how much we try to convince ourselves that we don't.

**Corey:** Yes. And okay, I have a story I really want to tell about this. It just happened recently. Keep in mind, I had been planning this podcast with you. I had listened to this. I knew all of this academically.

Last week—once again, we chose something that we really love. My son entered ski racing this year, and it has been the most joyful thing for everyone in our family. We're like, wow, look at us in a big organized sport and loving it.

So it's been wonderful. And last Sunday was the last one of the season. My son had been off the entire week with the flu. I hadn't slept properly in about seven days. And he still was sick on Saturday, but by Sunday morning was full of beans and like, "I can go do my last race."

This is the definition of just because you can doesn't mean you should. It was also daylight savings time.

**Sarah:** Oh goodness.

**Corey:** So we lost an hour, or however it works. Daylight savings time should be banned as far as I'm concerned.

That morning, as we're all so exhausted and struggling, my husband goes, "Did you know more accidents happen on this day than any other day in the year?"

Anyway, race days are chaotic. I had all these 7-year-olds all over the place. They were running out to go do their last run, and I realized in the chalet they'd left some garbage. I was like, I'm just going to clean up after them. I don't want to leave this mess.

I pick it all up, walk over to the garbage can, and suddenly I'm on the ground. It was a huge scene. Everyone stood up. People gasped. People ran over to me. I threw garbage in the air, almost had it land in the garbage can, which would've been amazing.

It was just a total scene. I'm actually laughing because I didn't realize anything serious had happened, but within a couple of minutes I realized that I was actually hurt.

So after my son's next—I still waited for him to finish his race—we went home, and I realized by that evening I had to be taken to the emergency department because I could not walk.

**Sarah:** Oh my goodness. Before you get to the part you want to get to, do you think this all happened because you probably shouldn't have gone to ski racing that morning?

**Corey:** Yes.

**Sarah:** Okay. So this is like a two-moral story. There are two morals to this story. The first moral is: just because you could go to ski racing with all those things that were happening doesn't mean you should have gone, and maybe you wouldn't have gotten hurt.

**Corey:** Yes. And then part two. I could have not gone because we have a wonderful community there, and they all would've helped all those little 7-year-olds if I hadn't been there. So I should have also just let people help me.

After not sleeping for a week, and then at the emergency department, I could barely walk. I was limping everywhere, and every turn, someone was offering me a wheelchair, and I kept saying, “No. I’m fine. I’ve got this.”

**Sarah:** Mm-hmm.

**Corey:** By the time I had just been limping all over the place, a mom there with a teenager literally forced me into a wheelchair.

**Sarah:** Mm.

**Corey:** She was there with her sick child, and she was like, “You know what? You need this.” She got me in the chair and started pushing me around until a nurse noticed and was like, “Oh, I can do this.” The nurse had been offering all along. It wasn’t their fault, it was me. I would not accept help.

And then while I was there, I was texting with a friend, being like, “I’m just sitting here bawling by myself in the emergency room because I’m really hurt. I’m supposed to be going on a ski trip next week.” Spoiler alert: it’s next week. I’m not on a ski trip.

And she offered to come and be with me, and I told her, “No, I’m fine.” She offered to come pick me up at the end of the day. I told her, “No, I’m fine.” I just kept telling everyone I was fine, and I wasn’t. I could not accept anyone helping me.

**Sarah:** So you didn’t end up letting her come or letting her pick you up or anything?

**Corey:** No, nothing.

**Sarah:** Aw. And she told me afterwards that she was like, “Corey, this is a sign that you need to slow down and accept more help in your life.”

Well, and also ask for help. It’s really hard for a lot of us to ask for help. People listening have probably heard it said, we weren’t raised—people listening have probably heard it said that we didn’t evolve to raise children in the nuclear family. We evolved to raise children in a village, or at least in a small community of people—grandparents who could help, cousins, younger and older siblings helping with younger siblings.

This hyper-independence, small family, nobody else helping, is such a recipe for burnout and exhaustion and all of the physical and mental health problems that people have. I think those things really could be healed if we did what we’re talking about in this episode: asking for help, accepting help, and not doing everything just because you can.

**Corey:** Yes, and it’s interesting because we talk to people about self-care. Self-care is a big buzzword now, but I often think it gets turned into just another thing that we’re expected to do. Instead of what I think is at the heart of self-care, which means just being honest with yourself about capacity.

**Sarah:** Mm-hmm.

There was some research done about problem-solving, and I forget what book I read this in, but when there's a problem, people often want to add things on—do this, add this, add that. There actually was research done about this, about what people tend to do when there's a problem.

What the research showed is that often the answer to a problem is to take something away or stop doing something. If anyone knows what that study is, shoot me an email, because I don't know where I heard that. But actually, taking something away is often much more effective than adding something in.

**Corey:** Yes, that makes so much sense. Honestly, until I sat down this morning to write some notes for this podcast, I didn't even realize what I was doing.

I couldn't get over it. I've been going to physio now for a week, and I can walk right now, which is nice. But literally, she gave me a giant list of stuff, and I'm like, I will do all of this. I'm going to add all this in. I am going to be the best rehabbed-knee person that ever existed.

Then I realized that's actually probably what got me into this jam.

**Sarah:** Yeah. And I think sometimes we like to be in control too, right? It makes us feel safe. It makes us feel it's familiar. Especially if we grew up with that sort of push to be independent, not needing people is the safe alternative, or not letting people help.

Just on Sunday, two days ago, my middle son and his girlfriend were over for dinner, and I had made this fancy dinner because it was her birthday, and I really had been cooking for the whole day. At the end of the dinner, I had piled all the dishes in the sink, and my son was like, "Let me do the dishes."

And I was like, "No, that's okay. I'll do them tomorrow."

And he was like, "Mom, I'll do the dishes before I go. You've been cooking all day."

And I had to force myself to let him do the dishes, because I'm so used to "I've got it, I'll do it, I can do everything." And not necessarily in this case, because my kids are grown up and I could have done the dishes tomorrow or whatever, but I just noticed how uncomfortable it was in my body to let him do the dishes.

And also I was really proud of him for insisting. I was like, oh, he's such a nice boy. He's such a sweetheart. And he did the dishes, and he did a good job, and I was grateful.

**Corey:** Yeah.

**Sarah:** Well, any last thoughts about this "just because you can doesn't mean you should"?

**Corey:** Go read *Jurassic Park*. It's fascinating. It was a fascinating book. It made me think a lot about AI.

But no, when it comes to this, definitely check out the podcast we did with Jessica. This would be another one of the landmark podcasts that I think you've done where I just can't stop thinking about it. I really think what we need to start doing is realizing we just can't do this all on our own.

Do you have any last thoughts, Sarah?

**Sarah:** Well, I was just thinking, I want to leave people with—maybe we'll leave them with a quote from the Jessica Slice podcast.

Again, if you haven't heard it, go back and listen to it. We'll put a link in the show notes. But we'll let her close out with some thoughts about care.

I think it's just a really nice thing to think about, that aspect of care and what it means to be a good parent, and what it means to think about all of the things that we've just talked about.

**Corey:** Absolutely. I think she's the way to end this.

And just in case anyone's wondering, this week my children all cared for me without me ever asking them to. So many times when I got myself too low, they were coming over and helping get me back up again. They were running up and down everywhere in the house to get me everything.

So just remember that you are modeling beautiful caregiving, and they're going to just give it back to you, and they're happy to give it back to you.

**Sarah:** Yeah. And I just also want to say that I think this quote we're going to end on from Jessica talks about how the care things that we've talked about don't have to mean that we are living up to these impossible standards or doing the intensive parenting that leads to burnout.

I think everything we've talked about in this episode are the antidotes to that burnout and intensive parenting and impossible standards. And I think the last piece of it is just giving yourself compassion for when that's hard because you feel like people are judging you, or that people aren't going to think you're a good parent. So just giving yourself compassion around that.

Thanks, Corey. We'll let Jessica close it out.

**Jessica:** I think for all parents there's this sense that you should be able to provide what your kids need without assistance, and that there is a distinction between people who give care and people who need care. And that a mom, in particular, is a person who gives care and doesn't need it.

And I think what disability forces to the surface, particularly for those who have some care needs like me, is: I give care and I need care, and that is part of my daily life. Needing care does not hinder my ability to be a valuable member of my family or a good mom.

I think it dispels that myth that you have to be one or the other. But I think if all parents could reject that binary of caregivers or care receivers, then it would mean that parenting didn't feel as impossible or didn't have such an impossible standard—that weakness were allowed, or dependence weren't allowed, or interdependence.

I think it would just change how we think about parenting in general, because there's this feeling, I believe, that particularly moms have to be all-powerful and limitless and perfect, and that it is a failure in the very definition of what it is to be a parent to start to need support and care.