

COACHING SESSION #1: Healing from Generational Sacrifice [Motherhood expectations | Working Mom | Mom Burnout] | Episode 25

[00:00:00] intro

Hi there! If this is your first time here, welcome to the Parenthood and Relationship podcast. I'm your host Markella Kaplani, a psychologist, a Parenthood and Relationship coach, and a parent myself. Together we explore the transformative journey of Parenthood and its profound impact on our relationship with ourselves, our partners, and our children, so that we can be present and show up as we envision without having to do more.

Let's get into today's episode!

[00:00:28] **Markella:** Welcome to today's episode. Today is the first episode where I am honored by the presence of a fellow mom who has come to vulnerably open up and have a session with me, really, on the podcast. Although she could have chosen to stay anonymous, Devan has decided to come on and speak to us about her experience of motherhood. Devan has two children, as you will hear, and I'm actually very glad that she decided to share with us her [00:01:00] identity and what she does, because as you will see, Devan is a person that feels her feelings, that is in the experience and is doing the work, And how wonderful is it to work with someone on grief and loss, which is what her expertise lies in when you know that this someone is also a very deep feeling person, someone who has experienced the grief and the loss and someone who is working through her own things and just living the human experience, not resisting it, Not repressing it, right?

[00:01:40] So I don't want to give away too much. Basically what you're about to hear is a coaching session that I'm having with Devan on an issue that she wanted

to bring in regards to motherhood and how she experiences guilt over certain things and you get to see how we work through it together.

[00:01:57] Now, why did I think that such an episode would [00:02:00] be useful? Well, I believe that it would be great based on the things that we discuss here, the heavy topics that we bring and the techniques that I offer, that you would be able to see all of this in action, how certain things can be dealt with.

[00:02:14] And maybe part of Devan's experience might resonate with you and the things that seem to have brought her peace and that warm hug that she says she felt throughout our time together. I am hoping that you will feel it too.

[00:02:31] I also want to note that throughout the session, there was room for extended pauses, and silence, and time to process, which, in order to make your experience as the listener a good one, I had to edit out. I do have certain parts that I have left the pause there because it is part of what Devan is expressing, it is indicative of her emotional state but there have been pauses and [00:03:00] silences that are very important that I had to edit out in order for you as the listener to not feel, Like the episode cut out for some reason and in order to shorten it a little bit for you.

[00:03:11] Are you ready? Here it goes.

[00:03:14] **Markella:** Devan. Thank you for joining me today.

[00:03:17] **Devan:** Hi, thanks so much for having me. I'm so excited to join you.

[00:03:20] **Markella:** Oh, I'm excited that you're here. And it's it's always an honor when someone agrees to come on and be with us and share their own story and their own viewpoint and experience. I think it's very helpful for my listeners to be able to see that they're not alone in their experiences. And so it's very brave, vulnerable. And I very generous, I would say that you've decided to come on and share with us today. So what is it that you would like us to discuss or tackle?

[00:03:51] **Devan:** Yeah, um, I mean, I guess for me, just I'm a mom of two toddlers, uh, almost one and a half and almost three and a half year [00:04:00] old. I was working full time until I came back from my last maternity leave. I work part time for an agency and part time for my own business. And I'm in the shuffle of becoming my own entrepreneur and working full time for myself in the new year.

[00:04:15] So navigating kind of all things. Parenting has been a lot, mean I've never been a parent before. So navigating the trials and tribulations of how to raise healthy, happy humans. I also struggle, I am a grief counselor and a therapist in general, and so for me, I have all this knowledge around attachment and wellbeing and emotions and regulation, and I find that that sometimes takes over.

[00:04:39] Over for me where I'm just trying so hard to think about all the things that I've learned and trying to instill that and yet at the same time, acknowledging that like I'm just a human and I'm dysregulated at times and I'm just trying to do my best and yeah, all things just. Learning this new road, uh, can be very tough struggle.

[00:04:59] Yeah. [00:05:00] I'm kind of, um, open to however the conversation takes us, but yeah, just in terms of like navigating, I guess, mainly like how to raise little as well. Also trying to do your own thing and not feel like you're taking away, I guess, from raising good humans.

[00:05:14] **Markella:** Yeah, that's a lot. I, and I completely feel the whole thing that you said about knowing too much sometimes and when we come from areas of work, of profession, that involve knowing certain things about raising children, whether that is coming from an educational aspect or as a psychologist like you are, or someone who works at schools or whatever it may be, or even in the health care and hospitals and things like that, you know, more information and there is this unspoken Expectation that I should be able to kind of follow what I preach and all these things that I've learned, I should be able to apply them.

[00:05:56] Then there is that pressure there. I, uh, I completely understand. but [00:06:00] I am noticing that what you wanna focus more on the thing about work

and balancing how you want to show up for your children, but also your aspirations for what you want to do in terms of your job. Right?

[00:06:13] **Devan:** Yeah, I feel like it's such a tug of war for me internally.

[00:06:16] I want to be this awesome mom and help raise awesome kids. And I wish I had the opportunities like my mom had to be home and raise us. but we don't, I don't have that luxury, in today's world. Um, and I also at the same time, like where this whole other hat, it feels like sometimes of like, I want to be this badass businesswoman and like help a bunch of people and make a difference in the world. So yeah, it kind of feels like I'm, I'm constantly trying to shift the hats and there's not just like one space of being, and I'm struggling with that.

[00:06:48] **Markella:** I hear that. What does awesome mom mean to you?

[00:06:52] **Devan:** Awesome mom is really like a lot about how I was raised from my mom.

[00:06:56] Like my mom Put her career on hold to [00:07:00] raise us, and she showed up all the time. like my favorite memories are her showing up to pick us up from school with freezies in her backpack on a super hot day so we had something cold and enjoyable to eat as we walked home together. Or decorating up our bikes for the sake of having a fun bike ride.

[00:07:22] a tent in the backyard and she just is so playful and always had these great ideas and activities for us and they just created a super fun home life while, also- I felt like- attuned to us. She helped us learn things, how to guard it and relate to each other and use our words and, uh, you know, be good humans to other people.

[00:07:48] Like, She's quite an aspiration to look up to and, what I came to learn in my own introduction into parenthood is I am not that human. I am not a, a big player. I will [00:08:00] absolutely set up all the fun, but I don't always want to play in the fun. I just kind of want to watch the kids play in the fun.

[00:08:06] And it's hard for me to be in that. And I think that's what makes an awesome mom is to be able to like jump two feet forward all in it. And I, I can tip my toes in and then I come out. So I think that in that sense, like that is a bit hard for me in being the awesome mom that I have in my head. and the other piece is I work full time.

[00:08:25] And so, and my mom was home with us. So like, I had this awesome life where my mom just, she was there. She was around.

[00:08:31] I can't give that life to my kids, so it's a little bit hard to feel like I can be an awesome mom when I, the standard at which I hold it to be is a lifestyle I actually can't live in. So, it's uh, yeah, a little bit of a struggle sometimes.

[00:08:47] **Markella:** There are lots of expectations. I'm wondering if the financial thing wasn't there, would you still want to work?

[00:08:56] Because a lot of times work, work is something that we love. It's
[00:09:00] something that gives us meaning and it's part of us, a big part of us. So I'm wondering what it is for you.

[00:09:05] **Devan:** Oh, I would definitely still be working. Um, when I was on my first maternity leave, I realized very quickly that home life was not for me.

[00:09:12] I couldn't be a well balanced human at home all the time. I needed to have some place, some space that was for me that I got to go and be my own person and make a difference and do my own thing and then come back so I could be a good parent and a good spouse and a good co human in the house. So I, I, I logically know that, like, I actually can't live up to the standards I have for myself in terms of, um, and all that she did, and at the same time, I just, I guess I wish I had, like, a little bit more into that lenience, uh, a finer balance than I have right now.

[00:09:48] **Markella:** Okay. And what would that balance entail?

[00:09:51] **Devan:** I think being able to come home and get to still do fun and activities. Like right [00:10:00] now I feel like I come home from work. I pick up the kids from daycare and I come home and it's like, Okay, here's your snack while I prep dinner and everybody unpacks their day.

[00:10:10] And then we sit and we eat and we might have some time for some play. Okay. In capacities, but sometimes it's been a long day and everybody just needs a bath and some books and some bed. So I would like more space to play and really play where we are getting outside more, especially for us right now being the summertime.

[00:10:30] Like I'm trying to purposely steer us outside more. But that also means like I kind of have a have to plan on what What are we going to do out there? Is it just hanging out in the garden, which we do a lot of the times, or are we going to do some other fun things? we do a lot of, I shouldn't say a lot, but like every day we have probably about an hour window where we do just parents and kids play, where we're actually very intentional and we, put the rest of the world to the side and we try to give our kids that one on one time just because they've been in daycare all day, and we want them to feel connected and we want them to be [00:11:00] able to unpack all the things that they've had, verbally or non verbally at this stage, but yeah, sometimes I feel like we're just kind of doing the same old thing over and over again, and I'm bored with it, and so I'm not as engaged in it, and that is sometimes a little bit of the struggle.

[00:11:15] I, I'm kind of tapped out at the end of the day for new ideas, and I also yearn to rest, um, while also knowing I needed to show up for my kids and not be the resting mom in the playtime mom zone.

[00:11:28] **Markella:** Right. And that was a question that I was going to follow up with. I'm wondering you want to be able to show up for your children and be fully present.

[00:11:37] And you want to be able to do that with a smile and having created activities and things for them to do. But I'm wondering how much time have you given yourself to rest and to be regulated and to to be relaxed while you're in this.

It sounds like in the background of your mind there is there is a motor running of I could have done a better job with another activity and uh [00:12:00] now I should also be prepping for dinner but I'm here but this is better for them.

[00:12:04] It sounds like there's a lot going on. Am I wrong?

[00:12:06] **Devan:** Oh, no, you've nailed it. Most of the time it's I could have done something different like when we get to the end of the week or the end of the weekend and I go, Oh, you know, I really wish we had have done more of something else. and we try every weekend we do like one thing out of the house to have some new experiences or something.

[00:12:23] again, as I say this out loud, I'm also like, Hold with the parts of my brain that I know we're like routine things are good and sort of the mundane is helpful. And it's not always about, you know, shiny rocks and big events. And so we have, I feel like we have that balance. I just, there's a, there's more of a balance that I would like to have where it's a little bit more.

[00:12:44] Purposeful new learning activity, whatever that looks like with the mundane rest and digest activities that we do, if that makes sense. Hmm.

[00:12:55] **Markella:** It really sounds very, very nice from the outside. So for me [00:13:00] as a third person looking in, it sounds like you've got a good thing going. It also sounds like on a logical level, it sounds like you are also okay.

[00:13:10] So if we were to just look at the logical part of what you've been sharing, it sounds like it's all good. It doesn't sound like there's an issue, but then we go more internally on a more emotional, on a more somatic level, and it sounds like there's a lot of tension there and a lot of conflict, like internal conflict about is this good enough?

[00:13:28] Is this okay? Should there be more of that? Should there be less of the other? Is there any guilt in the part of you that likes work and enjoys what she does outside of motherhood?

[00:13:42] **Devan:** I think for the amount of time that I'm doing it right now, like right now it's five full days a week. And so that to me feels like I have a bit of guilt of working full time.

[00:13:51] ideally I would love something like, Four days a week where I could have four days for me to make a difference in the world to be the person I'm growing and trying to be [00:14:00] and and help others and then. Three days where I got to be with my kids and I guess kind of feel enough that I feel like I filled their cups and my cup is full to with them.

[00:14:10] like, to put it into perspective, like, I don't, I've never left my kids with other people. Uh, we don't have a babysitter, we don't have a nanny, like, they go to daycare and that is a lot for me to put them in the trust of other people when it first started. and we've utilized some friends in emergency situations.

[00:14:28] maybe 10 times in my three and a half year old's life. and family, you know, maybe twice. cause they don't live nearby. so I, like our free time is all together all the time. And I think I yearn for that little bit of space to have time with my husband, where we could go on a date for the first time in four years, or you know, whatever that might look like, without feeling like I'm taking away from the very limited time we have.

[00:14:53] So if I could work four days and have three days off, I feel like that would maybe, hopefully, give me that space [00:15:00] and permission where I would feel a little bit better about leaving for a couple hours for dinner, or Whatever that might look like.

[00:15:07] **Markella:** You say hopefully, and as I'm listening to you I'm wondering, do you believe that it would give you the permission?

[00:15:12] **Devan:** I have no idea. To be honest, like, I feel like I'd need to be in it, and there's a big part of me that probably wouldn't feel like that was enough at that point either. just at this stage in age where this is, you know, the most foundational years of their life, and I'm spending a lot of it. Away from them.

[00:15:29] So yeah, there's bouncing around quite a bit.

[00:15:32] **Markella:** No, no, no, no, no, not at all it comes in waves and that's kind of how it comes internally as well. So I think it's very reflective of how a lot of us feel. And I think as listeners are hearing you speak, I don't think they'll feel like you're bouncing around and I would love for people to send their comments in and this YouTube so you could throw in a comment there of solidarity. I don't think that it's, it's random. [00:16:00] the way that we try to reconcile the many parts of us within motherhood. As we step into motherhood, we start to change and our identity changes. But you know this better than I do, as a grief counselor, there is that grief that we feel for the old self that we have to part with as we become mothers.

[00:16:22] Because what we've been taught in society is that as we become Mothers, we're adding a new role. So that's an extra task that you're going to take on and time manage and organize yourself a little bit better. You'll be able to do it well. But what happens is we're met with the realization that we change a lot.

[00:16:41] Our identity changes and everything now shifts around. How can it accommodate my motherhood identity? And we fail to acknowledge along with that, the loss of the old self, the grief, and we make that be a bad thing when we miss our old selves, or when we try to sprinkle [00:17:00] in parts of our old selves. So it sounds like part of your old self finds a lot of meaning and has a lot of passion for her work.

[00:17:08] And so you're bringing that in. Part of it is financial, but then a big part of it is, this is something that gives me happiness. It makes me a full, fulfilled human. And it sounds like it's a little bit in struggle with the new mom identity and the motherhood standards. So I'm getting a sense of these expectations and this.

[00:17:32] manual of how much time the ideal and great and awesome mom, to use your words, the awesome mom spends with her kids. And I'm wondering if it would ever be enough, even with that extra day, and what's going on with those standards and those expectations.

[00:17:48] **Devan:** Yeah, I mean, I feel like it's probably one of those, you know, always evolving kind of never ever outcomes, where I could always raise the bar, right?

[00:17:59] Like, could [00:18:00] I work less and be with them more? Could I, you know, how would we make this work? Like, always trying to achieve. I think that a big part of who I used to be was always trying to grow and move and change and, get to that next step or next level than I was at before. And it's kind of impeding the ability to have joy in, the moment of motherhood.

[00:18:24] Because I, while I'm cognizantly aware, like, I'm not wishing for the future of my children growing and raising quickly, I am wondering about how to be the next best version for them, or how can I give them more. And so that competition and that I don't know, kind of leveling up, I feel, of doing better, bigger, more, yeah, it's kind of always there.

[00:18:48] It's just showing up in, in different ways and in, unhelpful language sometimes.

[00:18:54] **Markella:** Yes. What happens when you're not able to be that person?

[00:18:58] **Devan:** Ugh, [00:19:00] I struggle, like I will, I become quite easily overwhelmed, need some space, I really, I can't be, I can't even show up as the mom that I want to be in the moment, for the moment that I had worked so hard to have, you know, like I, it's, that future focus instead of the mindfulness present where, you know, I was working to get to this level and I'm at this level and now I'm trying to go somewhere else.

[00:19:24] So it's, I'm always being robbed of the capacity to be here while also knowing I'm robbing myself of the capacity to be here and trying to come back. But the, the dysregulated part of myself kind of takes over and now I need to step away and, and support myself in order to come back and, and be in the moment.

[00:19:42] And I find that while I can do that dance and I've learned to recognize a little bit more when it's showing up and how I can do that for myself in shorter and

shorter timelines to come back and be present, um, and enjoy the moment that I've been, it still shows up and it's still

[00:19:59] Kind of, [00:20:00] it's still robbing me of some interactions and sometimes it's causing needs for repair because my kids are just wanting to be with me and I'm, you know, kind of freaking out about in my own self and I have to step away from them and I can't be there and then have to come back and apologize, you know, sorry, I couldn't play for that for a little bit.

[00:20:16] Mommy just needed to take some time and I'm better. I took my breaths and I'm back here. Let's play that thing again. Or what are you doing now? And so I can do it, but yeah. Yeah, it's, it's very much a, a future Rob of the present moment.

[00:20:29] **Markella:** When it shows up, what does it tell you? It sounds like there's an inner critic that shows up and then you become dysregulated, like you say, and you have to step away, which like small parentheses here, the fact that you step away is definitely a very healthy coping mechanism.

[00:20:46] I get how that also becomes part of the guilt tripping afterward because you stepped away and you missed. Time and time seems to be a very big, component that determines whether you are mothering well enough or [00:21:00] not. Right. But I get it. But it is a good coping mechanism. There are other ways that this could have gone.

[00:21:05] But before you become dysregulated, the part that comes with its expectations, what does it come and tell you? Can you think of an instance, maybe?

[00:21:16] **Devan:** think a big part of it tends to be. Like, that hard part of seeing, like, well, my, like, my friends or my siblings are able to do these things, like, how can I not do them?

[00:21:26] Like, they also work, or they also have multiple kids, or whatever that might be. They also don't have family support nearby, and yet I'm not seeing them

struggle so much as they should. what I feel inside right now. And, like, don't get me wrong, I'm not by any means, uh, great at this, and I have moments where I'm not an awesome parent, and I don't step away, and I freak out out loud to myself in the vicinity of everybody, but, Yeah, it's just that piece of like, you know, how does some moms that I am, my best friend [00:22:00] is so easy able to just like go out and be in the world with her kids and do all of these activities and I'm like, Oh God, if I have to leave the house with both kids on my own, after these kind of days, like I'm, I'm at my end.

[00:22:13] And I don't know if I have capacity and energy even to just run after two people in a public setting, let alone, um, manage, everybody's emotions and dinner hangry and all of those pieces. So yeah, it's definitely like a self criticism part around like, why can't you? Everyone else seems to be able to do this way better than you're handling it.

[00:22:34] **Markella:** So in this example, a friend of yours, for instance, would be able to take out the kids in a public setting and handle them on her own, whereas you will take them out in the garden with an unorganized activity and that's not enough.

[00:22:49] **Devan:** Yeah, I mean, I, uh, when you say it that way, I mean, I appreciate the reflection because, yes, it is enough.

[00:22:56] I feel like, for me, I get very overwhelmed to do public [00:23:00] events as a solo parent with two kids. I'll go with another. Like, girlfriend and her kids, or a sibling, my, what, like, my sister and her daughter, or my husband, of course, and, and we'll go out together, no bare problem, like, let's go to the park, let's go to the water park, whatever, whatever.

[00:23:18] And yeah, it feels much more manageable, but the idea of doing it myself, I feel so overwhelmed that I just contain things. In a space and place where I feel comfortable and safe and I can, like, I don't have to be hypervigilant and watching and making sure everybody's okay and I can hold them and touch them or see them or, The backyard is contained.

[00:23:39] It's got four fences and nobody can run anywhere. So I can manage and deal with one and play or play with the other and the other one's safe and totally fine. but yeah, sometimes that critic is saying like, Oh, like you could just go to the park right down the street. It's right there. Everybody else seems to be doing it.

[00:23:56] There's tons of other parents that are solo parents and multiple kids.
[00:24:00] and that to me just feels like a lot.

[00:24:02] **Markella:** You could be doing it. And so the fact that you aren't doing it, what does it say about you?

[00:24:06] **Devan:** Oh, that I'm not capable or, uh, skilled enough or somehow I'm too overprotective or hypervigilant, in order for that to happen.

[00:24:17] Like, there's a part of the work that I do that comes with a, a real realization around the, uh, safety features and how things impact, human beings and particularly small littles. And so for me, I have a very hard time trusting others to have the safety of my kids and also being in spaces where I feel like I don't have enough hands or I'm not physically able to be able to protect them.

[00:24:42] Um, so I get very overwhelmed trying to keep them safe, even though. You know, I could look around and they are safe and I could challenge that thought, but, it still does. I find it quite overwhelming.

[00:24:54] **Markella:** Yeah, it seems like it creeps in a lot. Yeah. Would you like to take a breath [00:25:00] with me? Because I think this was a lot.

[00:25:02] **Devan:** Yeah, I didn't expect that to come out.

[00:25:06] **Markella:** Let's take a deep breath. Just one inhale,

[00:25:11] exhale.

[00:25:12] What is the feeling that came up for you right now? Um,

[00:25:18] **Devan:** I'm just going to take a minute to name that properly.

[00:25:23] I think maybe, uh, fear would be the biggest one. uh, yeah, I mean, and guilt that I can't,

[00:25:33] I can't protect them from everything. And so, and then also guilt that I'm not allowing space to have more opportunities to try new things or try other things. Mm hmm. Because of the fear and the guilt that's there.

[00:25:51] **Markella:** Is that really true that you don't allow them the space? Because it sounds like you will make opportunity for that with a friend, with your husband, with [00:26:00] someone else.

[00:26:00] You will give them the opportunity to do something, just not solo.

[00:26:05] **Devan:** Yep, and then, and that's how I do it, is I do it with another parent or another adult that I trust with me. and then I, I feel safe enough to be able to create those. opportunities. I just, I feel outnumbered, so I don't do it.

[00:26:23] **Markella:** Yeah, even, even with one sometimes, depending on how quick that one is.

[00:26:28] Oh

[00:26:28] **Devan:** yeah, totally. And if I bring the dog in it, oh good luck, we are not going anywhere that I can't contain within a fence. because three now I'm really outdone.

[00:26:39] **Markella:** Yeah, it sounds like your inner critic just wants you to achieve more, more and more. And so it even is presenting you with a need that your children have and it tells you, you are not fulfilling that need for them to have the space to learn and do opportunities when you do. It's just under a different condition. But it's not good enough because you see [00:27:00] others being able to offer it in other settings as well. And so I'm wondering what that inner critic is

protecting you from as it asks you to show up doing more, more, and more with this, like, there's no ceiling there kind of more.

[00:27:16] Where did this critic pop up first, maybe, if you can go back, and what does it want from you?

[00:27:24] **Devan:** I mean, a big piece of it, I think, is just being like a firstborn. if you kind of look at that stereotypical development, I am a very true first born, human. also like witnessing it growing up. And my dad was an entrepreneur. So for him, it always was more and more and more because that is what allowed my mom to stay home and raise us.

[00:27:46] So he was always pushing himself. To do as much as he could in order for us to have the life we have. My mom, you know, pushing to her limits, I imagine raising three kids and animals and [00:28:00] a daycare and, and putting her career and herself on hold in order to create that life and then trying to, you know, To keep those going.

[00:28:09] I think the inner critic really is showing up, you know, I kind of think I always, I always tell people, you know, friends, family, clients, whatever, whenever there's a struggle, you know, look at yourself when you're like 80, 90 years old, you're on your deathbed, whatever that looks like, and look back and how do you want to see yourself in your life and these choices that you've made are the things that you've done.

[00:28:30] When trying to navigate hard decisions or, or difficult situations. And I think for me, I want my old elderly self to look back and say, like, I really. I did as much as I could, and I made a difference for as much as I was able, and I raised some really cool humans, and they're doing some pretty cool things for themselves or for the world.

[00:28:52] but it doesn't necessarily have like a specific standard or outline on what that means. It's [00:29:00] very vague and generic, so I think the vagueness about it prevents me from having a cap on what, where am I trying to go, or what would be the level that I would feel I did it.

[00:29:11] **Markella:** Yeah. There's some insecurity there that am I doing all the things to make sure that I get to that goal that I have in mind, where it could at the same time, if we look at it from a completely different perspective, the fact that there aren't rules could mean that you can take a more relaxed approach, like the one you take when you allow yourself to let go of the expectation and you go out and you're just there with them without any planned activity.

[00:29:38] And you're filling their cups and that could be more than enough because it could be a tradition that's there for the family that they can remember the way that you can remember your mom picking you up and having something for you to snack on, which doesn't take much planning. But to you, it felt like it came through so warmly when you were describing [00:30:00] it that it stuck with me as well.

[00:30:02] And it wasn't like the best most planned activity. And I'm sure that if she had a daycare, I'm sure the way that you're describing your mom sounds like she, she probably did a lot of cool stuff as well. Along with being playful, she had things that she planned, but it sounds like the thing that stuck with you most were moments that happened more regularly.

[00:30:21] And that showed her affection toward you more so than the actual activity itself. Her essence as being playful was something that you kept, right? And so this, this not having a manual is very scary, especially in our world with so many experts and so many books and so many things that we can get our hands on.

[00:30:40] And because of all the running around and how quick the pace is, we want to know what to do so that we can make sure that we get there because there's so many other things that are going on. So just give me the manual and the guideline and I'll follow it. Oh my. Tell me the procedure.

[00:30:57] **Devan:** A hundred percent.

[00:30:59] I will. You tell [00:31:00] me A, B, C, I will do that. You bet. See you next

[00:31:03] **Markella:** time. Bye. Yeah, see, and that definitely takes care of a lot of insecurity and fear about whether I'm doing it right or not, but unfortunately, parenthood isn't like that, and that's the scary part. I feel that fear that you described. I empathize.

[00:31:19] So, I, I wanted to Note something that I wrote down here as you were talking about your parents, and I'm wondering if there is a sense of self sacrifice in both of them. That's something that came through. It sounds like your father sacrificed himself in order to provide for the family. And it sounds like your mom sacrificed a part of herself in order to be there for the family.

[00:31:44] And I wonder if that is a value that has been passed down to you.

[00:31:48] **Devan:** Uh, as you say that out loud, yes, I would agree that it has been kind of like, uh, an unspoken expectation that comes in the title of [00:32:00] parenthood. I would imagine if my, you know, when my parents listen to this, that they'll argue with it, that they'll say, no, we never wanted this for you.

[00:32:08] But that is kind of how it came through, in that this idea that when you become a parent, you kind of let your needs go in order for you to show up for the way that your children need you. and in saying that, like, I understand that that's where I also struggle with my desire to go to work and be a parent.

[00:32:29] Because, like, my mom was not given that opportunity until we were much older, and we were in school consistently, and that she had the opportunity to go back to work. and my dad, he didn't have a choice, so he would try to show up the best as he could as a parent, and he did a great job. They both did great jobs.

[00:32:45] But yeah, there's like, you know, my dad's life for me growing up was mainly work. And as you know, a little bit of of parenting time where he could be there. Whereas my mom was so much parenting time, and a little bit of pieces for herself of [00:33:00] things that she got to do for her, And so yeah, I kind of feel like I, I have kind of walked into that idea of that expectation as soon as I became a parent that like I'm supposed to be at the back burner and my kids and their needs and the life I want for them is supposed to come first and foremost.

[00:33:16] And I burn out on that because I might lose my, I, I, I would lose myself completely and I would not be the mom I could, I need to be for them if I had to sacrifice completely. Okay. Or maybe even more than I am right now.

[00:33:32] **Markella:** It sounds like this becomes quite difficult because you sound like you admire both of your parents so much.

[00:33:39] And so in that admiration, yeah, okay. So in that admiration, it becomes very difficult to separate it from, from yourself. So if I admire my parents and I love them, And I felt like I was loved, then this is what love is. They taught you that love is [00:34:00] letting yourself in the back burner. And so then it becomes very difficult for you to create another path when that admiration is there.

[00:34:08] Maybe if there was some kind of struggle, it would have been easier to say, well, it didn't work. It didn't work. I didn't like the way I was parented. And so, hey, I'm doing my own path and I'm okay with that. But now there seems to be this, this standard that they set and that you felt good with as a child, but you, a part of you is saying, but I'm, I'm not good with that.

[00:34:30] **Devan:** And as a parent, like as an adult watching them and looking back at what You know, hearing the stories of my childhood and how things played out and the things that maybe we weren't aware of and, and being told about that later on in life. I look at that and I, I actually wish that they had had more for themselves.

[00:34:49] You know, I, I don't wish that they had to sacrifice or that they chose to do that because. It came at a huge cost to them in their own sense of self or their own well being and ability to cope and [00:35:00] grieve and all the things that kind of happened in those events. and it plays out now. I see them as, as adults and grandparents and, you know, they're, I think they struggle a little bit watching.

[00:35:12] I watch them struggle to still put themselves first. And their own needs and their own wants for their own joy and pleasure. and I don't, I don't want that for me. I don't want that for them. And I definitely don't want that for my children. So it's trying to figure out how to bring what was helpful and wonderful and useful,

uh, from my childhood to do that and, you know, maybe better for my kids so that I have a different, you know, retirement, you know, Kind of years or, you know, kids out of the home, empty nester life, and my kids then if they choose to become parents, that they don't have to struggle this way.

[00:35:54] **Markella:** As you were describing this, a part of you became emotional, and I'm wondering [00:36:00] what part of that was emotional for you?

[00:36:02] **Devan:** Um,

[00:36:03] I think just the sacrifice that they did and the cost that it came for them as a parent. Young adults, they were young and, uh, they had their own struggles enough as they were raised.

[00:36:23] And, um,

[00:36:27] you know, like,

[00:36:31] I don't want my kids to struggle. And I also turn around and I don't want them to struggle. And it's so hard trying to see how I can do it differently for my kids while trying to navigate these needs and, and tugs for myself. While also trying to create space and opportunity for my parents to see more for themselves and to try and cultivate [00:37:00] awareness so that the rest of their lives might be different, um, and at the same time also grieving the life they had in the struggles that came with it.

[00:37:10] Don't get me wrong, I think that they've had, and I think they would say this too, that they had wonderful adult years and some really wonderful childhood years, uh, my mom more so than my dad, but there is still this struggle that they're, they're still caught in the things that have always been their own patterns in their own life and as an outsider and as their kid.

[00:37:33] works in mental health and wellness and grief. I see that and I just, I, I, I mourn for them. I'm sad for them. And I also want to try so hard to help them create something different. So that also gets to be for me too, right? Like I get to

see them to be better and then that's better for me. And then I can be better for my kids.

[00:37:59] And [00:38:00] so it's, yeah, just, just sad for the lineage, I think. Yeah, it

[00:38:09] **Markella:** sounds like you connect with your parents through your own self sacrifice. And as you try to break your patterns of self sacrifice, it's become really important for you to heal them because if they let go, they give you the okay to let go as well.

[00:38:30] But so long as they don't let go of their own self sacrifice, and they don't heal themselves, a part of you doesn't allow itself to heal, and to draw a new path, because that would be betrayal. And maybe, I wonder if it would mean like, that you are discrediting, that part of them that did self, that did sacrifice.

[00:38:52] And so the good, good things that you received from that self sacrifice, you want to keep that because at least that makes it worth it. [00:39:00] That makes the other parts that are heavy on them worth it. But if you draw your own path, then does that make it sour, even more sour for them, the fact that they self sacrifice.

[00:39:12] So, I wonder if this sounds at all true for you, that you're stuck in this limbo of trying not to betray them by embodying their self sacrifice, that's one part, and then another part that realizes that this wasn't helpful to them, and isn't helpful to you, is really pushing hard to help them them. Get over it, even though you you don't have control over that, they've got their own reasons for why this is how this is what they chose for their lives.

[00:39:42] And it really wants them to heal so that you can heal and that you don't have to pass that down to your children.

[00:39:50] **Devan:** Yeah, it's really hard when you can't make other people do what you want them to do. Yeah. And so, yeah, I guess it's just, I appreciate that. I

[00:40:00] don't think I've ever looked at it in that way, or understood it to be that

way. yeah, and I guess, I gotta figure out how to let that, let them be as they are, invite them along, while also recognizing that I'm, you know, I'm free to do my own thing.

[00:40:16] And it's not a betrayal to them or what they provided me.

[00:40:20] **Markella:** How would you be able to honor them? Let's think of a way that you could honor them and still keep intact that admiration you have for them and all that they gave for you while still drawing your own path. Is there a world where that could happen?

[00:40:36] I

[00:40:36] **Devan:** I think, I hope that I've already been doing that in the sense of Going to work and putting my kids in daycare, that was a big difference between how my parents viewed raising children and, and chose to do that. and I think that was already a big piece. Um, I'm the only one in my family to have put my kids in daycare.

[00:40:58] So, [00:41:00] I'm really like in my immediate lineage. So, I already kind of stepped outside. the expectations or the path. and I think in continuing to kind of create more space between that, I think it's actually just giving myself permission perhaps around not having such high standards around, like, for example, my mom would make all of our snacks and like, she would always find new recipes and make super cool things. I don't have the time or mental capacity, not always the same interest in doing that same level.

[00:41:33] So I have. come to, you know, finding my own hybrid. Sometimes we make things, sometimes we buy it, and that's just how it is. and yeah, I, I'm not really sure what, I clearly need a next, another, another level. So I talk about leveling up this whole time, I need something more, I need something more in order to feel that little bit more of space between the two, I think.

[00:41:57] **Markella:** But as you're trying to create space between [00:42:00] the two, there's a part of you that struggles with that space. So my question wasn't

about creating more space just yet. Um, But about appeasing the other part that says, Hey, where are you going? You're trailing way too far off and you're betraying all of what they did.

[00:42:19] And so as you create this space, it's not a space from that allows you to heal, but it's a space from your parents. There needs to be a reframe there that this, the space that is being created is not a distance between you and your connection to your parents and your love for your parents, but it is a space between you and the parts that need to heal.

[00:42:43] I think what, what I am looking at is, um, a way that these two have integrated. And so your inner critic, if, if it had a protective mechanism, it sounds like it's trying to protect your connection with your parents. [00:43:00] Because if self sacrifice was their way of love and you're creating a gap between self sacrifice and parenting with your children and you're saying, well, no, there are different ways to love and I'm finding other balances and healthier ways that I can do it.

[00:43:15] Then that, that if these are meshed in meshed, then that. equals that becomes a formula where it equals. So my parents, that wasn't love. And we need to, to kind of, negate that connection that there is between the two, that me drawing my own path doesn't mean I am rejecting my parents and all I have received from them.

[00:43:37] **Devan:** Yeah, I, yeah, I'm wondering if I kind of maybe need to create my own kind of little just like affirmation or like little phrase that I remind myself of that because I just really liked that equation language that you gave that made a lot of sense and just something to give that daily reminder or.

[00:43:55] moment to moment reminder when I'm needing it. What could that be?
[00:44:00] Maybe it's not the final

[00:44:01] **Markella:** one that you choose, but you can brainstorm.

[00:44:04] **Devan:** Yeah, I think I liked that forging my own path does not mean a lack of love or acceptance.

[00:44:14] I feel like there's so many things that I wanna go, but, and, uh, so maybe that's not quite it, , but, um,

[00:44:21] yeah, it might, at this point it might just be, it's okay to forge my own path. Mm-Hmm. . And, I, I wanna say there's something about love there, but I don't really know how to phrase that yet. on what fits with all areas that that would feel like it was encompassing.

[00:44:35] **Markella:** Yeah, maybe something along the lines of forging my own path is love and brings healing to the lineage. I like

[00:44:47] **Devan:** that

[00:44:47] **Markella:** to the lineage. Because they forged their own path and their own path involved the self sacrifice. And as you can, as you step away and you see it objectively, you can see that it harmed them in certain [00:45:00] ways.

[00:45:00] But as the child within you, it recognizes all the good things that it received. So there is that part of you that says, but that, that wasn't good for them. And then there's that other part of you, that child that said, yeah, but I got a lot of things. And so these two can coexist. And that was the path that they forged.

[00:45:18] And within that path, you did receive a lot of love. You did receive a lot of weight, which seems to reside on your chest. I noticed that you touched your chest when you were talking about the, the heaviness of their self sacrifice and what you found out later as an adult. But. So it did have some things that were heavy, however, they forged their path and it was love, it turned out as love for you.

[00:45:43] It resonated with me the way that you spoke about them, that came through more so than anything else. So, forging your own path, is love for your children and is love for them as well. It honors them because they taught you to forge your own path. I [00:46:00] wish

[00:46:00] **Devan:** I could give you a hug.

[00:46:06] You nailed it with that.

[00:46:07] Thank you. I didn't, I didn't know I needed that. I really appreciated it.

[00:46:22] **Markella:** Well, there's, there's so much to unpack and knowing that this is, this is a one off. Yeah, it's a one off. I don't want to like open up anything else and just leave it unattended. So, I, I want you to, Let me know what you are walking away with and if there's anything else before we leave that because I I see that we got into some depth and I don't want to leave you hanging.

[00:46:49] So yeah,

[00:46:50] **Devan:** no, it's good. I don't feel hanging. I actually just feel like it was just like that a warm hug. To be honest, and it was like the [00:47:00] tears and the breath here just come from a place of like, oh, it's okay. Yeah, it was quite releasing actually. I, I appreciate, uh, not wanting to leave me hanging and I, I'm not hanging.

[00:47:11] I actually just feel quite settled and like I have a little more space to breathe.

[00:47:16] **Markella:** Oh, I'm so glad. I'm so glad. Thank

[00:47:19] **Devan:** you. I appreciate

[00:47:20] **Markella:** that greatly. You brought a tear to my eyes as well. Thank you so much for coming on today and for, for releasing and for being you and for being so vulnerable.

[00:47:32] **Devan:** Thank you.

[00:47:32] I really appreciate this and, and woof, the work that you are doing is, I hope, more. Primary parents or parents in general, moms, if that's how they identify, can find your stuff as helpful as I have, because I, I really do feel like it's, we might not have the villages that we used to have or that people always talk

about, but it doesn't mean that we can't hear it in our earbuds as we're walking the dog or having our early morning coffee and the kids are still [00:48:00] sleeping and I appreciate it greatly.

[00:48:02] **Markella:** Thank you so much. And before we go, I do want to give you a chance to share your work because I think it's super important and it does coincide a lot with what I do as well. And in my humble opinion, but you'll tell us yourself. Thanks. So is there anything you'd like us to share?

[00:48:20] **Devan:** Oh, thank you. That's so kind of you.

[00:48:22] Um, yeah, so I'm a grief therapist located out of BC, Canada, and, um, I do virtual and in person work. my specialty is in grief and loss. Um, and I, it's, I specialize in that because before I was 20, I had 20 losses. And I remember being 19 and having my 20th loss and going, wow. I've had more than one a year, even though that they didn't happen one a year, but, and I just felt really compelled to, like, be in this realm, and had known I wanted to be a therapist.

[00:48:52] So I felt like I could be someone who could sit in this, because not everybody can. And so I've really enjoyed working in this area for the last, [00:49:00] uh, 11 years now. Actually, it was, through my work and working with clients and, my dad, had a, a bout of cancer and, um, really put into perspective and to support Tory loss of really important people, on more of a home front.

[00:49:15] And so I'm currently creating and have created a bunch of, Free downloads and stuff like that for people on just how to navigate anticipatory loss. and I'm building a course on how to collect everything that you can of your people. Doesn't have to be parents, um, but you know, people that we know are aging or we might lose one day and we couldn't imagine life without them.

[00:49:35] So, I'm currently building that so that we can have the hugs that we miss and the voices that we need and the happy birthday. Song that we haven't heard in a long time, ugh, gets me every time I talk about this. so yeah, if, you know, people are needing to know how to soak up every ounce of the people that

they love, I'd love to be able to share the resources and so that grief feels a
[00:50:00] little easier to navigate and not so lone.

[00:50:02] **Markella:** That's such important work that you do, and you're right, not a lot of people can do it. It's really, really significant to be able to help people through those very deep feelings. Oh, and thank you for that. And please make sure you send me all of the links. Yes. Anything you've got to share. Yes, I will. All of these nice downloads that you're talking about, your website, anything that, uh, people could find and reach you in.

[00:50:27] I'll have that in the show notes, in the descriptions, everywhere, so that people can find it.

[00:50:32] **Devan:** Oh, thank you. That's so sweet of you. Thank you so much.

[00:50:35] **Markella:** Thank you so, so much. I really appreciate you. I really appreciate that you came here full self, and I look forward to keeping in touch.

[00:50:43] -----

[00:50:43] **Markella:** Wow, this was a deep conversation and I am so grateful to Devan for coming on and so openly discussing and expressing her emotions and her thoughts around motherhood. I think a [00:51:00] lot of us can relate, I know I can, with most of the things that Devan brought forth.

[00:51:05] And I'm hoping that this episode has given you the permission to open up about this, or at the very least, to feel like you're not alone, that this is not an experience that you, Just you are having, and just FYI, it's not just Devan, it's me, and it's a lot of the women that I work with that have grappled with these very same issues, one way or another.

[00:51:28] So as you depart from this episode, if maybe you are having some intense emotions having heard it, I would invite you to journal about them. See what this episode and what Devan's experiences and the things that we discussed about the inner child, about the legacies that our parents have left us, about that

struggle in trying to be someone else but not wanting to betray our lineage, about wanting to heal the previous generation so that we can feel [00:52:00] okay to heal ourselves and to bring healing to the next generations.

[00:52:04] If any of this resonated and if anything came up, I would love for you to journal it. And if you'd like to send me a picture of your journal, my gosh, I would feel so honored. You can do that by emailing me the image or the text at info@MarkellaKaplani.Com or by DMing me on Instagram with a screenshot [@Markella.Kaplani](https://www.instagram.com/Markella.Kaplani).

[00:52:27] If you like this episode, if you think that other moms will find it helpful, Please make sure to pass it along, to share, and to leave a 5 star rating so that I can know that I'm doing a good job and I can continue on this path.

[00:52:41] And If you too find that you would like to have this experience, well, it's free and you can stay anonymous if you like, so don't hesitate to sign up by sending me an email at info@MarkellaKaplani.Com with the subject line of podcast guest application so that I can send you a [00:53:00] form and we can do this together.

[00:53:02] As always, take care of yourself, and remember, you're doing an amazing job. See you next Sunday!