

Big Little Feelings: Question and Answer

Deena [00:00:04] Big little besties. Welcome to After Bedtime. Where today, by popular demand, we are going to be answering the burning questions that you all sent in for us.

Kristin [00:00:18] Finally, here we are. It's after bedtime. The kids are asleep and it is time to get down. I'm Kristin.

Deena [00:00:25] And I'm Deena. We're the duo behind the ever popular Instagram account, Big Little Feelings, which helps you navigate all things parenthood.

Kristin [00:00:32] But this is not a boring parenting podcast.

Kristin [00:00:35] There will be inappropriate jokes. We will be getting down and dirty. So put those babies to bed. And let's. Have fun.

Kristin [00:00:45] [Singsong] Bestie

Deena [00:00:47] What's up girl?

Kristin [00:00:49] That was new. I knew I never thought of bestie.

Deena [00:00:51] Yeah, I like it.

Kristin [00:00:53] Thank you. Thank you. No one can see this except for Deena, but I just adjusted my microphone so that I could just, like, almost lay down.

Deena [00:01:03] You're in lounge mode over there.

Kristin [00:01:08] Like, I'm basically lying down right now.

Deena [00:01:09] Looks really cozy.

Kristin [00:01:10] I have no regrets. How you doing?

Deena [00:01:13] You know, I'm mildly sick because I have a toddler who attends school now. So just forever ago, we will have runny noses.

Kristin [00:01:22] I mean, we're also playing with fire today because we we are supposed to record separately due to the daycare rule that we also have in between us two people. I can't even talk right now. We'll get to why I can't even talk right now. You and I, we have the day care rule as our policy for like, should we do podcast together in person or should we podcast separately apart? So like, if anyone has thrown up diarrhea 24 hours, we just do the day care rule and lowkey we are breaking the daycare rules.

Deena [00:01:55] If you're listening, you probably thought it was me because I said I'm sick.

Kristin [00:01:59] What a plot twist.

Deena [00:02:01] Whoa. It's not me.

Kristin [00:02:03] I just—It just dawned on me that, like, I actually might also be getting sick from you, though, is what it sounds like.

Deena [00:02:08] Yeah, that's true. But we've got spend a lot of time together. Like you're already screwed if. You've been exposed to me for a few days on accident.

Kristin [00:02:18] Okay. Well, yeah.

Deena [00:02:19] So best of luck.

Kristin [00:02:20] We texted each other at, what, like, 10:30 p.m. last night. So that was like, red alarm. Red alarm? Child is throwing up. We got to record separately. Everything is thrown off. We got to rearrange your workday. The whole. The whole thing, the whole thing. And you know what I did? This is why I'm so tired today. Not just because I have a kid who was throwing up yesterday. Now I'm lowkey, just like, why are you sitting in a room with me?

Deena [00:02:45] I literally have been thinking, wait what am I doing here?.

Kristin [00:02:51] You willingly did this. [Laughter]

Deena [00:02:53] I'm so stupid. You told me that it was one time.

Kristin [00:03:02] She did only throw up one time to be fair. But, like, you don't know. No, you don't know.

Deena [00:03:06] Oh, my God. No. Kristin, I should have just followed the day care rule. I didn't have the right headphone adapter everything's really stressful and is like, You know what? Screw it. Screw it.

Kristin [00:03:18] Really tired, too, you know, where it's like executive decision making is hard, where it's like, you know what? I have it like, is this—am I going to figure out headphones and recording separately?

Deena [00:03:29] Decision fatigue.

Kristin [00:03:30] Yeah, yeah. She did only throw up one time. So I mean, I am just going to lie to myself. But here's where I really f-ed myself is normally, normally, first of all, I get debilitating anxiety. But I didn't this time because like seven years and you're just like, this is life, right?

Deena [00:03:46] I still get the anxiety, but go on.

Kristin [00:03:48] To be fair, three years ago, I was debilitated, debilitated. I'd have Clorox, there'd be Lysol. We're shutting everything down now. It's like you can't control anything. Okay. I'm just I've released that control. So instead, what I did this time is I just kind of like cleaned it up, tucked her and got her into my bed. Yes. She can even go in my bed. And I'm going to, like, sleep face to face with her, like, all screwed. It's fine. Normally, I would have gone to bed right then and there. Right? Because you're like, I don't know what the day. I don't know what the night is going to be like.

Deena [00:04:17] Every minute counts. I just got to get whatever I can.

Kristin [00:04:19] Go right right to bed. And instead [laughter] instead my brain because, you know, we've been like traveling for work. We've been going nonstop. Right? So instead, my brain went, am I going to have, like, self-care time again for the next three days? Like, am I going to be able to even watch Bravo or sit alone for five seconds for the next three days? If she's peacefully sleeping here, I'm going to pour a glass of wine. I'm going to pull up Bravo on my computer and I'm going to spend three hours just having nice, quiet, alone time before all hell breaks loose.

Deena [00:04:53] This is all making sense. When I backtrack it, you send me a housewife clip. [both laughing] It's all making sense.

Kristin [00:05:05] So I'm really tired today

Deena [00:05:06] And I stand by it but yeah you must be exhausted.

Kristin [00:05:09] Dying lowkey. Yeah. Yeah.

Deena [00:05:12] I might cough during this episode. Yeah, we're doing our best, okay?

Kristin [00:05:19] And the best is good enough. Um, speaking of doing our best, I feel like today's episode is going to be the best because we've never done this before.

Deena [00:05:26] This is new.

Kristin [00:05:27] This is new.

Deena [00:05:28] I don't like new things. Yeah, I'm a very rigid person.

Kristin [00:05:34] Very self aware person. I have to say.

Deena [00:05:37] I am. I can just own that. Like, I'm not flexible. I don't like to pivot. I like to plan in advance. I know what I'm doing.

Kristin [00:05:45] Love a prepped moment, but like, beyond, you know, like the tantrum. Whoo!

Deena [00:05:50] And it's me tantruming.

Kristin [00:05:53] That's what I'm insinuating. I love a new thing. So I'm pumped. I'm fired up, and I feel like it's going to be fresh. Like we we've been noticing some of the feedback some of the besties have been asking, Why don't you try out kind of like a Q&A episode where normally it's at the end and we just kind of like rapid fire and like, hey, maybe your top questions, right? Top submitted questions and really break those things down for us, like do an episode of a Q&A and we're like, Today's the day. Let's try it today.

Deena [00:06:27] No, I am excited.

Kristin [00:06:28] Okay, good.

Deena [00:06:29] I'm I'm rigid, but I'm excited.

Kristin [00:06:31] You can be both. I'm just I'm just I'm just here, you know? I'm just grateful to be here.

Deena [00:06:36] You know, I'm always jealous of how flexible you are.

Kristin [00:06:39] That's weird, frankly how flexible I am. All right, let's get started, shall we?

Deena [00:06:44] Let's do it. Do it. Kick it off.

Deena [00:06:56] Let's just dive in. This first one is from Meghan, and it says, My two and a half year old only ever wants Mommy and gets upset if dad does anything. Example putting her in the car seat, changing diaper, making food.

Kristin [00:07:11] Okay? This happens all the time, by the way, right? It's like, not always, Mom. For the record, I mean, I feel like a lot of times it is. But honestly, like my second one, she only wanted Daddy to do bedtime for six months. Lowkey, I was destroyed. Yeah, like the first time I was like, woo hoo! Mom gets to party. Like, of course. Yeah, Dad, go to bedtime. And then it's like [sigh].

Deena [00:07:35] Yeah, but my. My other bestie, the one who I met in the park. If you listen to episode one, they're in a parent preference phase right now, and it's daddy everything. So it totally depends and it changes. Yeah.

Kristin [00:07:48] And by the way, the load of being the preferred parent, let's just start there because if we let this cycle on for a little bit too long, resentment I feel like can build up burnout for sure. You can get into sort of like a really not great place, honestly. And it's because a your kid only wants you and only you can cut the sandwich just so and only you can do about them and only you can do bedtime. So we're going to help you. It's going to be hard, but we actually have a plan for this so that you can walk into this and really nip this in the bud. Or if it's gone on too long, never too late. Start today.

Deena [00:08:30] 100%. Not to mention, it's hard being the other parent who feels like low key, Heartbroken. Rejected.

Kristin [00:08:37] Yeah, but you know what? I was. I forgot. Who was that we were talking to one time. I think we did like a bestie circle or something. And the dad was there too. And we were talking about this, and I was like, Man, and how are you? How does it feel for you? And he was like, is great. Yeah. [both laughing].

Kristin [00:08:55] Like, it's so devastating. It's really hard. And he was like nah, it's awesome.

Deena [00:09:01] Well, sometimes, like when my family went through it my husband was devastated.

Kristin [00:09:06] Here's what we're going to do. And it is not necessarily easy. It's similar to when you're putting away screen time, when you're holding any kind of a boundary, it's not going to feel great at first. And we know why we're doing it. We're doing this because with consistency, both mommy and mommy or mommy and daddy or however two parents identify, they can both equally get there.

Deena [00:09:35] Mm hmm. So what we're going to do is start with one specific area that we're going to tackle consistently. So let's just do let's do bathtime as the example. Okay? So we're going to have one parent and the other parent switch off of who's doing bath time every other day, if that's possible. And depending on your work schedules, it might look different, but you're going to set up a cadence to it. And then we're going to let our toddler know who's doing bath time on what days We can make a literal chart that they can look at, where it shows the days of the week and has a picture or has a letter for the name.

Kristin [00:10:13] Or a stick figure. This does not need to be fancy.

Deena [00:10:15] Exactly. This is just something to show visually that everyone can look at and know who's doing bath time on what day and it is non-negotiable.

Kristin [00:10:25] And by the way, pick a day beforehand where you are feeling confident, you are feeling ready, you're not going to feel defeated or kind of wishy washy. It's really important that you feel confident walking into this. And once that day hits the calendar, we are really sticking to this most of the time, of course, there's going to be a day something's going to happen, but really be ready and confident walking into this.

Deena [00:10:46] That's right. Because what is going to happen more than likely is when that non-preferred parent, it's their day. Your kid is going to scream, your kid is going to fall apart and push back so hard because in the past that's gotten them the other parent most of the time. And so we are going to hold boundaries and it's going to be hard. It's going to feel loud and overwhelming. But you are the calm, confident parent, the leader of your home who's going to hold that boundary with love when that happens.

Kristin [00:11:18] And honestly, sometimes it's all about just giving the other partner or the parent a chance, right? Where it's like you feel so badly because they love you so much and so you don't want to. But we really want to instill in our child a sense of trust where it doesn't feel like they're looking to you and you're going, Oh, you're right. Like I am better at this. Your dad probably shouldn't. You know, it kind of sends the signal of like, I don't know, I'm kind of wishy washy on it, too, right? So we really want to show up confidently, and every situation is going to be different. But hopefully we really do believe like, Hey, dad can give a bath, right? And so it's like we're sending the message to our toddler, You are safe with your dad. Your dad loves you so much. And what I really like to do, too, is a lot of times bedtime is hard, right? Or people are kind of like, Oh, man, bedtime. I know. I feel that way most nights, right? But in front of our toddlers, language does matter. So what I really love to like, put in with this a lot of times is like, listen, mommy loves you so much. I love you and I love doing your bedtime. And dad can swoop in and say, I love doing your bedtime and your kid might be going, No, no, no, no, no. But the messaging is hey. You know, I just want to. I want a chance. Right? It's Mommy's turn and daddy's turn. And I love doing your bedtime. That's why we take turns. We both equally love doing bedtime with you.

Deena [00:12:46] Exactly. And so if we go to the bath time one again, So your kid might be falling apart and you can soothe them. You're going to hold a boundary and comfort them at the same time and say, Listen, I hear you're feeling so upset. You are so mad or sad or disappointed that mom's not doing bath time. I hear you. And it is okay to feel that way. And you are safe with daddy. Daddy loves you. Daddy's doing your bath time and I will do it again tomorrow. And we're just going to hold that boundary and write it out. And this is the important part. You got to write it out and see it all the way through. And like Kristin said, when you do that, you give the other parent a chance to show and prove that they

can do it. And the more you do that, the more it becomes this reinforcing positive cycle where your kid starts to build trust, like, Oh yeah, I had a good experience, like, This is going to be okay.

Kristin [00:13:40] Totally, totally, totally.

Deena [00:13:44] Yeah. So write it out. Do and you feel ready. I know for a long time I was not ready and I just endured the pain of being the preferred parent. And then we tackled it.

Kristin [00:13:53] Yeah, Yeah, it's hard.

Deena [00:13:54] But it's so worth it.

Kristin [00:13:56] Yep. Deena, I'm going to need you to read the next question, because my eyes are closed.

Deena [00:14:00] Stay with me Kristin!

Kristin [00:14:03] I don't even have the questions. I'm not prepared.

Deena [00:14:05] Okay, You just sit tight. I got this.

Kristin [00:14:08] So I really appreciate you. I love.

Deena [00:14:10] I love order. I love list. I really love this. I came in organized.

Kristin [00:14:13] Okay. Okay, great.

Deena [00:14:16] Okay. Next question is from Rebecca. What's your alone time go to show right now?

Kristin [00:14:26] I mean, I only have 500. How do you how do you choose, like the top one? Yeah. Your favorite one. Yeah. I think right now has to be Housewives of Beverly Hills. That's not even a guilty pleasure. Like, that's not even when people say, like, Oh, what kind of garbage? Guilty. Like, this shit is good.

Deena [00:14:42] I love it. I don't watch, you know, that often. I'm not consistent in the very few times that I watch it, I'm like, Oh, I love this. Like, why don't I do this more? Oh, yeah. I don't know how to work the app. So if someone could just teach me how to get the app to go on my TV. Mike, are you listening?

Kristin [00:14:59] I think it's called cable Deena.

Deena [00:15:01] I'm not paying for that. I'm not doing that. So let's find a workaround.

Kristin [00:15:05] What is your go to, like, self-care TV show right now?

Deena [00:15:08] That's complicated. That's a really loaded question.

Kristin [00:15:12] We have time.

Deena [00:15:13] Okay. Last night was a really great example. So what I wanted to watch was Selling Sunset and yeah. And then when I started to watch it, I was like, Oh, this might not be good for my mental health. So I had to turn it off because if you follow us on Instagram, you might know I've been very vulnerable and shared about how I've struggled with disordered eating for a really long time, and I'm tackling that as best I can right now. But when I watched that show, I mean, I am right back in it. It's not good. So I turn that off.

Kristin [00:15:48] Good.

Deena [00:15:48] And in good instead. You might be shocked. I went to Riverdale.

Kristin [00:15:53] I'm not shocked.

Deena [00:15:54] You're not?

Kristin [00:15:55] People love a Riverdale.

Deena [00:15:57] Why do I feel like it's like a teenage show?

Kristin [00:15:59] I don't.

Deena [00:15:59] And I'm not supposed to be watching it. What is that feeling?

Kristin [00:16:01] Maybe. Maybe. I don't actually know enough about Riverdale, but I feel like that's fine, right? There's not like, age limit. No, it's okay.

Deena [00:16:09] Yeah. No, I'm just going to. I'm going to embrace it.

Kristin [00:16:14] There's got to be a lot of moms that watch it right now. Yeah. I don't know though. I don't. I don't watch it. I like it. It's scripted, you know what I mean? Like, there's scripts and like, words, and so it's just. I can't do that anymore. I don't know why.

Deena [00:16:25] Yeah, I can't tell you anything about it. I think I halfway watched it, so I can't even tell you what I saw. But that's the best and I think that's why I watch it. There we go. Right.

Deena [00:16:36] So this one's from Dallas. I love that name. So fun. Doing your potty training course. How do you feel about using M&M's or stickers as rewards?

Deena [00:16:48] You know what? This is a really common thing. And no shame if you're doing it or you've done it. What we find is that it's. It's not always the most long lasting route to go. If you're really trying to teach a kid how to notice in their body that feeling, that sensation of, oh, I need to pee, I need to poop, I should run to the potty. This rewarding with M&M's or stickers or little toys or whatever it is, actually kind of impedes that process, right?

Kristin [00:17:16] Because they're so focused on here's what's the goal. The goal is getting an M&M. That's what the goal is. So they could sit there forever. There's so many strategies that they could kind of use in order to like get the end result, which is get the M&M what we want the motivation to be in. Her mind is, Oh, this feels kind of yucky when this light gets in my pants, I should. I should probably get over to the potty. We really want to be connecting why we're going to potty in the first place. I think rewards can work kind of

well at first, right? You're like, Oh, this is working because they're, like, doing it for the reward.

Kristin [00:17:54] We're going to see. Especially if you have a strong little child like some of us do, we're going to see day to day three, day four. Suddenly you got to ramp those rewards up.

Deena [00:18:05] You get stuck on a rewards treadmill. Like make it better. Make it bigger.

Kristin [00:18:08] M&M is not going to do it. Okay. Suddenly we're doing like a party. We have confetti. We're like, mom and dad are like banging spoons on their head. We have to level up and level up for them to care about going on the potty here.

Kristin [00:18:24] And when you're not there, then they have zero motivation to go potty right where it's just like, Well, I might as well go right here because I'm not going to get them. And this is really what sets our potty training course apart. I think from the other strategies that are out there, not only we're going to walk you through how to really do intrinsic motivation rather than rewards, but it's also going to answer every single teeny, tiny question you may have like this one, and it is going to make your child feel good. It's going to make your child feel proud. It's going to actually strengthen your relationship. Potty training can sometimes be a little bit of a shit show.

Kristin [00:19:06] Let's just be honest, no pun intended, I know, but really can be kind of a shit show and it's so stressful and you don't know what to do. The cool thing about our course is that it literally has all of the strategies from Deena's child therapy practice where tantrums are going to happen, like push back and you got it. Defiance and all these things that parents like wouldn't necessarily expect come with potty training. We really, truly are going to walk you through how to get that intrinsic motivation so it can happen from the start. Like I feel like with the rewards and with other things, it can be such a lengthy, long process because it's like, okay, first you're teaching them how to do with them. All right, we got that part down.

Kristin [00:19:47] But now step two, we have to figure out how to do it without an Eminem. We just cut right to the chase so you can really do this thing in three days. So if you're thinking about potty training at all in the next year, by the way, we are having our Black Friday sale, it is the biggest discount you'll ever see on both of our courses. Potty training made simple is only \$27 because it's 20% off right now. So jump on it. We promise we're going to walk you through every single situation, including this question, which was a great question. Thank you, darling. Thank you. Thank you. Had two big little feelings.com. If you're thinking about potty training, we're going to hold your hand. It's not going to be that bad. We promise. We've got you.

Deena [00:20:39] Mali is asking how to navigate learning healthy emotion regulation as a parent while simultaneously teaching it to your kids. Woof. Emphasis on the Woof.

Kristin [00:20:54] Woof is right. I think our whole generation is feeling this exact question. Yeah, My God. Like we're all feeling it. And we are. I think, woof, you start with it's not our fault. Like it helps me to understand, like, yeah, okay, wait, wait a second. A I'm not a monster. B, I don't do this to myself, right? I am this way because these patterns and this way of someone speaking to me happened when I was younger. And so that's why in these loud, chaotic moments, I'm triggered, You know, it's not my fault.

Deena [00:21:34] 100% as a therapist. That's exactly, exactly what happens is the way that our parents respond to us. Literally build your nervous system, build your brain builds, how you react to things in the future and the like, literally the coping tools that you have for tough situations. And so that means a lot of us just don't have coping tools, right?

Kristin [00:21:56] Well, it might in parenting at the next level, though, because that's not even that. That's why I can't attend a Zoom meeting, you know, like I fall apart. It's like I can't I. Can't handle the stress. But like, with parenting it's so literal. Yeah. So. Oh, I'm hearing loud crying and screaming, and instinctually your body is literally going to react the way that your parent had reacted to you when you were screaming and crying. So, like, if you're a parent was a neck pincher, right? And was like, stop crying. You're going to feel the visceral urge not because you want to, not because you think that that's right. Not because you're going to feel that literal urge. If your parent was the one who did, what's another one? What's another like? It doesn't even have to be bad. It could literally be anything if your parent was just like, Oh, stop crying, Come on.

Deena [00:22:46] Oh, yeah.

Kristin [00:22:46] He was just going different grades.

Deena [00:22:48] A totally different guardian. If you had big feelings when you were little and then it caused your parent to get overwhelmed and flooded and have their own big feelings and then they were out of control and they were super sad and they're crying. That becomes overwhelming. You know?

Kristin [00:23:03] Yeah. So you'll literally respond, want to respond in the same way of like, okay, you're going to start to become flooded. You're going to start to become heightened. You're going to start to become big in the exact same way. It's literal.

Deena [00:23:13] Okay, so what do we do? Because we are literally all trying to be the best versions of ourselves. It is really hard as a parent when you weren't taught these things and the good news is it is literally never too late to teach yourself these these skills and kind of like repairing yourself is what we're going to do. Okay? So the way we're parent is and I wish we could do honestly a full episode like we should at some point, but here are just like some quick little tips on it for today that you can start using. So a lot of us didn't have a parent who was kind to us during hard situations or we've made a mistake. So step one off the bat is show up with kindness to yourself when you make a mistake, especially in parenting, because we're going to do it. We're going to be overwhelmed, pushed to our limits out of energy. We're going to yell, snap, whatever it is. So show up with grace for yourself and remember that that is part of being human.

Kristin [00:24:08] And I feel like this also extends even beyond parenting, by the way. Like when we really talk about re-parenting, I feel like the hardest part is like you have that inner voice that you're sitting in traffic or you make a mistake at work or you make a mistake with your partner and you go like, idiot, whatever it may be and you're just so hard on yourself. It's like being kind to yourself in moments of parenting, messing up, but also like you have to put in the work and do the practice of like actually all the time. And it's worked.

Deena [00:24:36] And you deserve that. And it probably didn't happen to you as a child. And that's why it's hard now. So hard. Okay. The other thing is start to name your own feelings to yourself, like practice throughout the day. Just being like, Oh, I'm feeling

disappointed or I'm feeling frustrated, whatever it is. Because a lot of times we didn't have feeling talk. So that's not natural to us. And the more we can do that, we soothe ourselves. When you can name what you're feeling, you contain the chaos within you. It like instantly shifts your brain. That's also something. The more you practice it, the more you can teach it to your kid, which is dope.

Kristin [00:25:12] [Laughter] I don't know that I've ever heard, like, emotional regulation followed by dope. But I. I love it. I'm here for it and I live for it.

Deena [00:25:19] And the last thing I would say is start to practice some grounding strategies, like taking a deep breath. It sounds cheesy, it sounds so cheesy, but it really does send calm chemicals from your brain and you can maybe find that pause before you react when you're triggered, before you just, like, instinctually react. Take that. Cause and we can try to respond.

Kristin [00:25:41] I haven't always worked on the pause, like with my other relationships. Does that make sense? You know what I mean? Like, I try so hard with the kids and have a pretty good job. I do a pretty good job, but I'm also not bad. I'm not like reaching for 100% right? So yeah, when I say do a good job, it's like you're really 60, 70% of the time.

Deena [00:26:02] Yeah, that's what we're aiming for.

Kristin [00:26:04] But like the real the real work starts when you can, like, pause with everything and emotional regulation, right? Hundred percent. Yeah. It's a work in progress.

Deena [00:26:12] Yeah. So it's just like showing up for yourself as the parent that you wished you had who like, made you feel safe and let you make mistakes and loved you no matter what. It's hard work. We'll get we'll do a full episode on that.

Kristin [00:26:24] And by the way, like, I was going to say, I need to go now. Take what you just said and take it to therapy. So let's not sleep on therapy. By the way, like if you grew up in situations that were less than ideal. Dean and I are in weekly therapy. My husband is in weekly therapy. Your husband is in weekly therapy. Like there is nothing wrong with you. It does not mean you are a monster. If you will have a short fuse, if you immediately react, it also just might mean you actually need to like rewire those patterns and like having someone who knows how to do that with you. You don't have to do it on your own.

Deena [00:26:59] And in a lot of times it's our relationships early in life who kind of screwed us up. Okay, so you need a relationship. You need this safe relationship to help you work through it.

Kristin [00:27:10] The safest relationship is a therapist. Yeah. Okay. That makes.

Deena [00:27:13] It's amazing.

Kristin [00:27:14] Oh, bless her. Okay. Next question.

Deena [00:27:18] Okay. This one's from Alexandra and oh, it's for me. This is a burning one. Deena, how is your marriage doing?

Kristin [00:27:26] Well, that is a burning question. I see that all the time.

Deena [00:27:28] And also a loaded question. So back story, if you don't know. And I think episode four is a whole download on just how bad my marriage got after having children. And jokes aside, it got so bad that we really, really were like, right on the brink of divorce. And last second, he, like you said, decide to go to therapy and that was a game changer and things. So set things right Now they are not perfect by any means. They are slightly better than what it was. And I would say the biggest barrier recently because he's going to therapy, he's growing, he's changing. He's like actually trying to participate because for a long time I felt like a single mom in my marriage.

Deena [00:28:17] I was doing everything alone and so resentful. And once he started to get better, like be better, whatever you want to call it, grow. To heal, if you will. He started to show up and I was so far gone that I couldn't even meet him halfway. Like I had a foot out the door. And I think that's been the hardest part recently, is like getting my foot back in so that I can actually participate in making the relationship better. So that's been my personal journey and I feel like I've made some progress in it. And yeah, the journey just continues.

Kristin [00:28:56] I think that's what's hard is that like, I know this is actually the most common phrase, but I don't think we see it in real life. When people say like marriage is work, it really is work even for the healthiest, best couples. And, you know, you're saying it's a work in progress. And I feel like that's something that I know so many people on our page are grateful to be seeing because you only ever see happy, perfect, amazing family photos or you see like, oh my God, this person got a divorce. So like the middle. And sometimes it's like on the lower end and something. But like we're all, I think everyone working together but partially after kids. It just rocks you.

Deena [00:29:42] 100%. I'm with you. Yeah. Okay. Last question here is from Tori. Oh, this is a good one. A lot of a struggle with this one. How to stop hitting, especially with siblings.

Kristin [00:29:55] Oh, boy.

Deena [00:29:57] Hitting is a behavior that all kids, by the way, they're going to experiment with at some point. Sometimes it ramps up with siblings. It's going to be a constant thing that has to get work through. And the big thing with hitting with toddlers and preschoolers, with the way that their brains have developed, the one thing we want to try to avoid is a big, big, loud, no reaction. It feels so logical because it's like, I need you to understand how serious this is. Like hitting really is not okay, and we want to convey that. But what can accidentally happen is that this young age, with our brains developing, it feels fun. It feels exciting, it's loud and it can accidentally reinforce the behavior. Like they want nothing more than your attention. And when that makes you stop everything. Come over, give a big attention. It can accidentally cause them to do it more.

Kristin [00:30:54] And like, imagine this, right? Your toddler is playing. They're doing whatever. You're washing the dishes. And your toddler would love nothing more in this whole world because they love you so much. Then for you to turn the water off, come over and just focus on them. Right. And we have to get our stuff done. So we're going to do the dishes. We can't always be doing that. Now imagine the scenario that Deena just walked through, which is they hit their little baby sister. Okay, What do you do? You turn the water off from washing your dishes. You walk over to your toddler, you maybe grab them by the hand and look them right in the eye and do a big no, that's not okay. So what we just did was the exact thing that our toddler is actually dreaming of. Now, what this doesn't mean is

we're not ignoring we're not going to completely ignore the behavior and we're not going to completely ignore the toddler. That's not the answer. The answer is we have to come in with really cool, calm, confident energy. And we're just going to contain the situation. We're just going to contain the situation. No one is taking in new information. The brain is probably beyond activated. They are not learning in that moment. We're swooping in calmly and we're containing, hey, it's not okay to hit. It is okay to feel angry. I'm going to keep you safe now.

Deena [00:32:10] Exactly. When your kids brain is next level emotional, they can't take any info. And so you're just keeping everyone safe. And by the way, I feel like this is an area where people feel like you have to have this really, like, angelic voice at all times when we're doing this. But really, you can be firm, You can be like, it's okay to feel upset and it is not okay to hit. I'm going to move you now to keep everyone safe.

Kristin [00:32:35] Yes, girl. Yeah. Also, we get this question all the time, by the way, where they're like, Why are you meaning the one who hits you? Don't you don't have to. You know, this is a game time situation. You know, like, do you need to move baby sister? Do you need to move the one who's hitting? Like it really depends on whatever you think is best for that situation.

Deena [00:32:48] When my kids were really little, it was most often I'm picking up baby now to keep them safe. Yeah. And by the way, the most critical piece of this is that your toddler, your preschooler, has not developed the front part of their brain, the prefrontal cortex, that helps them with impulse control and emotional management. And this is why in this stage we see a lot of hitting, we see a lot of pushing. They don't have words yet to explain what they need or what they're feeling. And a lot of times the body takes over.

Kristin [00:33:18] And even when they do have words because they feel like that's a common misconception, is it's like, listen, I've been teaching you angry. I've been teaching you all. Now you know how to say like, Hey, no, stop that. I don't like that. But that doesn't mean that those parts of their brain for impulse control are developed just because their language is there. So even if they can say it, you're still going to see that a lot of the times. And it's only through calm repetition over and over and over and over that we're really going to see meaningful change. And then and then we've got to teach coping skills, right? Because nothing will change if we don't actively teach them what to do when they do feel angry.

Deena [00:34:00] Exactly. And the best time to teach that is in a calm moment. Later, after the meltdown, the tantrum has passed because that's when their brain can take in new information that prefrontal cortex is back on back functioning.

Kristin [00:34:15] Girl like I'm the same way. I'm going to tell you something literally in couples therapy, we have to work on this because I'll like try for an hour with my husband. If we are in a fight, I will just try to make it make sense in it, you know, And my therapist is like, just walk away first. Take a timeout for for they get.

Deena [00:34:33] Let your brains come online.

Kristin [00:34:34] Because you can't do reason and logic. So we're just sitting there like boom, boom, boom, boom, duh. Like wait for the calm moment later. And then in a non-judgmental way, you come in, whether it's your husband or your toddler, you come in

and you go like, Hey, earlier, this was a really hard moment. Here's what was happening. Right? Like, that makes total sense.

Deena [00:34:55] Exactly 100%. And when it comes to siblings, by the way, I think this is like a game changing thing that you can start to bring into your house today is when someone in our family says, no, we're stop. We put our hands up right away. Right. And that is something to keep saying and helping them do over and over and over. And I have seen this just totally transform my sibling relationships in my house.

Kristin [00:35:21] Absolutely.

Deena [00:35:22] Yeah. And so you might have to step in, by the way, and sometimes be like, I heard, no, stop, I'm going to help you now.

Kristin [00:35:27] Right in our house, we know someone says, no, we put our hands up. You just do that over and over and over. Here's the last little tip that I loved to do when mine was really close. Like three and 1 or 3. And you know, baby. Is try your best not to blame one child more than the other. Right. Again, it's kind of comes back to what you were saying in the beginning where it's like you want them to understand how bad they were or how bad that behavior was. But actually, shame can really impede learning. And yeah, toddlers can feel shame. You know, they want to be good kids. So when you can come in and even when it was like two really close together, so was a little baby, right? A little baby and a two year old. I would go and I would be like, okay, hands are not for hitting. You know, hands are for this. It's not okay to hit. And I would turn to the baby then and literally say to the baby, okay, baby. And also, when you feel mad, it's not okay to hit. Okay. And so you're kind of teaching them both at the same time. It's nice because it makes it feel like, okay, this is just a house rule, right? We don't hit each other. We don't hurt each other rather than one kid being the bad kid.

Deena [00:36:34] Yes, I totally, by the way, messed that one up just yesterday. I rarely do this one, actually, but I totally did it last night where I was turning. I was like in my refrigerator for a second, actually trying to get something and then, boom, like, baby goes down. He's crying. Oh, boy. I don't know what happened. I turned around and I asked the three year old, I was like, Did you push him? And he said, no. And I realized, like, by the way, they were position like, you really didn't like baby just went down, you know. And I got down and I apologized. I said, I'm so sorry that I even thought you were the one who pushed like you didn't. I'm sorry that that wasn't great. Like you didn't feel great. Yeah. Yeah.

Kristin [00:37:16] I love that. I mean, I don't know about you, but I definitely felt like a bad kid in my family. You didn't, though. I think you were the good kid.

Deena [00:37:24] I was the one who was always trying to keep it all together.

Kristin [00:37:33] We're trying to do things differently. I love that. I love that for our generation and for us. We're trying our best.

Deena [00:37:38] We really are.

Kristin [00:37:39] And speaking of trying my best, I have to go.

Speaker 3 [00:37:43] Shall we go enjoy these last few hours before we're both deathly ill and trapped in our bathrooms? [Laughter] God damn it.

Kristin [00:37:51] Oh, my God. Knock on every piece of wood. But I was lowkey thinking the same thing. I'm like, How many more hours do I have in me? Like, you know what I mean? Yeah. Okay, Well, I'm glad we got to do this because this was like the top priority. When I texted you last night, I was just like, We just need to record the first thing in the morning before I go down, because you never know.

Deena [00:38:11] No, you never know.

Kristin [00:38:12] What rest of the week holds. Ah! Whoo! All right. Be a little besties. Meet me at the target for the Clorox wipes and the trash bag. And do you do that, Deena? Do you like when your kids get sick—

Deena [00:38:23] I'm all stocked up. My husband thought I was nuts. Last time I did it, I came home with, like.

Kristin [00:38:29] Oh, he did.

Deena [00:38:30] Oh, my God. Bags of medicines. And just like everything you could ever need, he's like, Where do you have a thermometer? I'm like, You never know.

Kristin [00:38:37] This is called anxiety shopping, and it is a crucial part of the sick and.

Deena [00:38:41] This coping skill.

Kristin [00:38:42] Yeah, I'm going to go hit that up right now. That's what I'm going to do to make myself feel like I'm in control.

Deena [00:38:48] I like it.

Kristin [00:38:51] Big little bestie, I hope to chat with you next week.

Deena [00:38:54] I hope whatever happened pending on our health, if we possible day care rule. We may see. Goodnight, big little bastard.

Kristin [00:39:04] Goodnight, big little bestie. We talked a lot today about hitting and tantrums and meltdowns. And right now, our biggest sale ever is happening at BigLittleFeelings.com. You can get 20% off both of our best selling online courses. Winning the toddler stage and potty training made simple they are game changing courses for anyone with kids ages one through six. Winning the toddler stage has been aptly nicknamed the toddler manual because literally when we say any toddler problem under the sun exists, it is in there. We are going to help solve your problem, walk you all the way through it and do it in a way that makes you feel good. At the end of the day, we believe in our courses so much that if they don't totally change your life, we will literally refund you money back. Guaranteed, no questions ask and Pro-tip bundle both of the courses. This is by far our top seller and it makes sense because you get to save money at the lowest price. Our course bundle has ever been. So had two big little feelings.com. And by the way just saying if you're even thinking of potty training in the next year literal year these courses don't expire. So like if you're thinking or you're approaching the age, grab it now while it's on sale. Head to big little feelings.com/courses. To get 20% off today.

Deena [00:40:41] Thank you so much for being here with us. This has been an Audacy Production executive produced by Lauren LoGrasso, produced by Daniela Silva, edited by Bob Tabbador. And theme music composed by Liz Fall and studio lighting design by Shane Sackett and designed by Jackie Sherman. Special thanks to Audacy Executive Vice President and head of Podcasts, Jenna Weiss-Berman. And thank you for being here with us. We can't wait until next week.