

## Episode 4 - My Marriage Sucks After Having kids - Deena's on the brink of divorce

**Deena** [00:00:04] Today we are talking about how my marriage sucks after having kids and I'm on the brink of divorce.

**Kristin** [00:00:13] Finally, here we are. It's after bedtime. The kids are asleep and it is time to get down. I'm Kristin.

**Deena** [00:00:20] 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** [00:00:27] But this is not a boring ass parenting podcast. There will be inappropriate jokes. We will be getting down and dirty. So put those babies to bed and let's have fun. Okay, Deena, there's something on my mind that I just want to, like, verbally vomit. I feel terrible saying it out loud. I want to preface with that.

**Deena** [00:00:49] Woah, okay is a safe space. Go ahead.

**Kristin** [00:00:50] I feel like you think it's spicy. It is not spicy at all.

**Deena** [00:00:52] Okay, well. I'm going to be dissapointed now. Thank you, go on!

**Kristin** [00:00:56] You for sure are [laughter].

**Deena** [00:00:56] No judgment, but.

**Kristin** [00:00:57] This is gonna be a really boring fucking thing to say, actually, but I'm dying to say it which is Yesterday I went to a kid's birthday party that started at 4:30 U.S. time PM Pacific melted.

**Deena** [00:01:13] No no no no.

**Kristin** [00:01:13] 4:30 p.m. is my point. It was a 4:30 to a 6:30 p.m. kid's birthday party.

**Deena** [00:01:18] That's wild.

**Kristin** [00:01:19] For I think a five year old that I'm like, how old were they? Five year olds. Okay, now, the whole time that I'm getting ready for this party, I am, like, filled with fucking rage and I feel horrible saying out loud, but is a 4:30 p.m. birthday party like, is this a trick? Like, did they reserve a 4:30 p.m. birthday party just for the parents that they fucking hate in the room? Like they just hated and like the real birthday party was at like ten and they just invited all of us that they hate to the 4:30 p.m. birthday party because who does that?

**Deena** [00:01:52] Yeah, you can't even really be there. Like your soul's leaving your body at 4:30.

**Kristin** [00:01:56] I truly, I feel like I lived 15 lives by the time 3 p.m. rolled around. I mean, I'm already at the point where, okay, we're not making dinner like kids are on iPads. We've given up, right? We've given up all hope on the day. We're just trying to stretch it to bedtime. And I'm like, "Oh shit", we have to go to a birthday party. Like, we have to get

dressed, we have to brush hair, we have to go be presentable. I need to be presentable. I have to talk to other parents. Holy fucking shit. And then not to mention the ride home, right? Like I'm picturing my head already. It is 6:30 p.m.. We are fired up. We have had cake. We have had popsicles. We have been in the bouncy house. It is one of two ways this can go, which is one: Your kids are going to just peacefully go into sleep because they're so exhausted or what we all know is going to happen. It's me, a fucking nightmare. It's gonna be a fucking nightmare zone. Yeah. Oh, my God. And, man—

**Deena** [00:02:48] You are going to race home. You're going to pray that those kids do not fall asleep in the back seats.

**Kristin** [00:02:53] Oh, shit. If they fall asleep for two—a two minute nap in the back of the car is devastating. And that is the only word that I kept coming back to with a 4:30 p.m. birthday party. And I don't know if I'm being dramatic. I'm like gaslighting myself. "You're being ridiculous. You're being a— am I being ridiculous that it feels devastating?"

**Deena** [00:03:14] You know what? No.

**Kristin** [00:03:16] Okay. Thank you.

**Deena** [00:03:16] I'm going to—I'm going to—It's nuanced, okay?

**Kristin** [00:03:18] Okay. Okay.

**Deena** [00:03:19] I'm 80% with you, and I'm 20% only because of my very unique circumstance right now where I have children who napped 6 hours in a row back to back, but I'm like, well, that's like two hour window where both kids are awake. So, like, for me, that's the only time we could do a birthday party.

**Kristin** [00:03:38] That's interesting.

**Deena** [00:03:38] But when I'm at that birthday party, I can't function. So that's the problem.

**Kristin** [00:03:45] [laughter] Correct, correct. Like, where is my housewives? Where are my jammies? No one should see me if the sun is setting and we're in the wintertime. So the sun is setting like five, right? Like I'm a pumpkin. I need to get the fuck home. I need bravo, I need my kombucha, my glass of wine, my tea. I don't give a shit what it is. I just need silence alone time.

**Deena** [00:04:04] We're locking the doors in the door. The family is in the house. We're trapped in here. We were just writing it down until bedtime.

**Kristin** [00:04:10] You know what I mean? It's about like the kids. The kids are great. And by the way, I fucking love a birthday party, by the way.

**Deena** [00:04:16] I know you do.

**Kristin** [00:04:17] Right? That's an unpopular opinion.

**Deena** [00:04:18] I don't.

**Kristin** [00:04:19] Exactly. Most people on our page, they said that they. I think it's like, what, 80% hate a kid's birthday party. I love a kid's birthday party. I love going to shop for presents for the kid's birthday party, which most parents hate. Like I want to go to Target. I know what Penny wants. I know—

**Deena** [00:04:35] My nightmare.

**Kristin** [00:04:36] —that Penny wants a fucking unicorn backpack and you open it up. You open the zipper. The backpack is the mommy's tummy. And inside there are four little fuckin unicorns and Penny goddamn loves this shit.

**Deena** [00:04:48] My son would love this too, for the record.

**Kristin** [00:04:50] So I love a fucking birthday party, but a 4:30 p.m. birthday party. It feels like an accost, I'm just going to say it. It feels like a literal—A nightmare. A nightmare.

**Deena** [00:05:02] Kristin, that's valid.

**Kristin** [00:05:03] Okay. Thank you.

**Deena** [00:05:04] You know what also feels like an accost?

**Kristin** [00:05:06] Ooh, tell me.

**Deena** [00:05:06] The fucking marriage that I am trapped in most days.

**Kristin** [00:05:20] [Laughter] Oh shit. Let's talk about you're saying the words, I'm on the brink of divorce. You're saying the words my marriage sucks after having kids. I want to just start and say, I don't know that I see that that often. I don't know how you feel, but I feel like what I see, whether it's celebrities, whether it's Instagram, people we know, people in the mommy group, whatever it may be. I'm seeing happy families, perfect families. The filter is on. It looks amazing. Sounds amazing. We're alligned. We're holding hands. And then what I see is the announcement and you're like, Oh, my God. What Olivia Wilde and—. What? They're perfect. I can't like. Blake Lively and Ryan Reynolds. Tomorrow they're getting a divorce, right? Because there's, like, no indication.

**Deena** [00:06:04] Exactly. Now, this is why my husband and I are down to share our story, because it can feel so lonely and make you feel so damaged when you never see or hear anyone struggling with their marriage in this weird gray area that we're in after having kids.

**Kristin** [00:06:21] So let's unpack this, because I feel like this is, you know, this is hard territory. This is—this is uncharted.

**Deena** [00:06:28] No, I'm glad you bring this up because this has been so bad for literally since I became a parent, like over two years now. It's just been this horrible cycle that we get stuck in where it's like, I feel so alone when I'm parenting and like, we are just roommates at this point. Just kind of like raising kids together. We've lost the connection. I'm going to be honest. Like I'm irritated a lot of the time because I'm doing so much. We both work. I'm carrying the load like I feel alone. And no matter how many times we have the conversations, like I'm trying my best, I go to him, I'm like, "Hey, this isn't working. Do you think we could touch on it? Do you think we could try to work on it? Like, what are your ideas?" And usually it's defensiveness, it's anger. It's like, you know, we kind to get to the

point after that where it's like, okay, maybe we could try X, Y, Z and divide the load and, like, nothing's helping. It's just an up or down and there are worse times are like real lows and then it gets a little bit better for a few weeks and then it's like right back into it.

**Kristin** [00:07:32] And I feel like the part that's really important here is you're saying this is not anything that's new and this isn't something that's just like, all right, he cheated, it's over, right? This is something that has been bubbling or does bubble since the moment you said Hunter was born.

**Deena** [00:07:50] Literally, since my first child was born. Let me paint the picture for you. Okay. I go into labor at 5:30. That baby is out by 9.

**Kristin** [00:08:00] Quick.

**Deena** [00:08:00] Okay. We ended up having a home birth. So we're at home. We go through the night with our newborn. Like, obviously we don't sleep. How am I going to sleep with a brand new baby there? Like, I have to watch it. You know everyt fucking second. So then by 6:30 a.m. that next morning, he is downstairs. He is on conference calls, literally was on phone calls for work from 6:30 until, like 10 p.m., like usual. Right. But that didn't change. So that was like day two, day three, day four, day five. I'm just on my own with a newborn taking care of the baby. And then when I finally do ask for help and I'm like, Hey, I just need a little food, little water, like I can't walk. I can barely go to the bathroom because I lost so much blood. Could you help me a little bit? He was irritated. It took like an hour and a half to get water. It was bad. It was really bad. And it just didn't get better.

**Kristin** [00:08:56] Mm hmm. Well, it seems like your whole life changed, as most of our lives changed literally the minute. Like, you have no idea what you're in for. You read all the fucking baby books and you have no idea. Once that baby comes out of you, just barrels out of you. Physically, you— nobody fucking talks about how, like, postpartum recovery is that the first 24 hours, right? Where you're, like, bleeding and all of that shit, and it sounds like you were on your own, where your whole life changed in an instant and his didn't like his instantly, didn't. There was no he didn't take the leave. I think he had leave, but he didn't take it. I don't know if that's right. Did he have parental leave?

**Deena** [00:09:37] He had parental leave. And to be fair, no one in the industry had ever like in his company, no one had ever taken that paternity leave that was available. So he didn't take it.

**Kristin** [00:09:47] That's fucked up, man.

**Deena** [00:09:48] He didn't take it.

**Kristin** [00:09:48] Yeah. And so his life stayed the same, literally from day one, literally from moment one.

**Deena** [00:09:53] With an extra burden, which was me needing help.

**Kristin** [00:09:56] Right. And you, by the way, we're a very successful and still very successful child therapist leading your own child therapy group. But that was gone. Your life changed in an instant and his didn't.

**Deena** [00:10:07] Flipped upside down.

**Kristin** [00:10:08] Yeah.

**Deena** [00:10:09] Everything

**Kristin** [00:10:10] All right, so we're on this island. We're alone. I remember a pretty big moment. Kind of three months in, like it was really bad for three months. Like it was just lowkey bad every day. But there was a moment—

**Deena** [00:10:22] Bad every day to the point where when I was asking for help, he literally stood at a door one time, like on the way out while he was leaving me and he was like, I feel like your fucking butler.

**Kristin** [00:10:32] Mm hmm. All right. Yup. And then there was the car incident.

**Deena** [00:10:37] Oh, my God. Yeah. So my baby and I were on a walk. He was three months old. We're walking around our neighborhood in Los Angeles, literally about to cross the street when a car almost hits us because that car was actually stolen. It's like a hit and run stolen—classic Los Angeles. Literally three inches away from swiping me and the baby. I'm fucking shaking. I'm crying. I'm, like, standing in the street. I can't walk. I can't move. I call him and he's like, Hey, what's up? I'm like, We just almost got hit by a car. Like, I just need your help. Please come outside and meet me here. I'm just right outside. I'm outside our house. And he's like, Hey, I'm on calls right now, so just come on in. Just come on in. I'm like, I can't. I don't think you understand. I almost died. The baby almost died. I need help. I'm shaking. Like, please help me. And he's like, I can't right now. So just come in and we can talk and hangs up. Yeah. Okay.

**Kristin** [00:11:34] So just again, you're all alone. You get pregnant because there's a little bit of postpartum, and by little I mean a lot postpartum anxiety even with your first, you know, and you get pregnant when he is six months old.

**Deena** [00:11:47] A lot of people are like, what the fuck were you doing if your marriage is falling apart? I just want to say—

**Kristin** [00:11:53] Lot of DMs coming in hot.

**Deena** [00:11:54] Lot of DMS on there.

**Kristin** [00:11:55] [Laughter]

**Deena** [00:11:57] I just want to say this is, you know, things were falling apart and this is how I envision kind of like my life going with kids. Yeah, I was going to figure it out, but it was a really spot.

**Kristin** [00:12:07] But you always wanted two babies. You wanted to two little babies to hold and your husband wasn't going to stop you. [Laughter] Nothing was going to stop you. You're going to get it.

**Deena** [00:12:16] Not even a crumbling marriage was going to stop me.

**Kristin** [00:12:18] Yep. Yep. Okay, so we postpartum anxiety. We're trucking through. I mean, you're trying to keep up with our business, which we took off, by the way, with no help, no family. Beginning of a pandemic, by the way. So you can't even hire help. We can't have family come over nothing.

**Deena** [00:12:32] What a fucking nightmare.

**Kristin** [00:12:34] Wooo, fucking nightmare. And then you get pregnant.

**Deena** [00:12:36] And then I get pregnant and that I look back like. That's what I'm talking about is the rollercoaster where it's like we have the talk and it gets better for a week or two. And then, like, all of a sudden he's totally checked out again. He's on his phone. He's not participating in anything. It feels like our family is the last place you fucking want to be, hanging out with us. And so it goes through these ups and downs. And finally, I'm nine months pregnant with my second baby and things just hit rock bottom. I'm like, What the fuck are we doing? And I remember sitting in our extra room just like we're both sobbing, We're both sobbing like we both hate our lives right now. We don't like each other. What the fuck are we doing? Why are we continuing this?

**Deena** [00:13:22] And like, do we split up? Is that maybe what's best for our family? And we had to kind of like sit with that for a while and be like, It might be. It really might be. We kind of like had this moment what really he did, he was like, I don't want to split up yet. And I sat with myself and got really comfortable like, okay, am I seeing divorce right now as a threat to try and make you behave better, or am I really at peace with like, yeah, I accept all that comes with this change? And I was at that point, I was at that point, but he wanted to try a little bit more. He said he'd go to therapy like thing fucking God for therapy. He's going now. That's the only thing that's helping.

**Kristin** [00:14:03] Bless therapy.

**Deena** [00:14:05] Love good therapy.

**Kristin** [00:14:06] Bless therapy.

**Deena** [00:14:08] [Sigh] But yeah, that was a fucking fucking terrifying moment.

**Kristin** [00:14:12] Yeah. And so you're pregnant. You have a sixteen month old. Baby comes, little baby Cohen.

**Deena** [00:14:16] Little baby, baby. You watched him come out of my vagina. Thank you!

**Kristin** [00:14:21] It was wild. We'll have a whole episode just about that. About how you can somehow in a room go from 0 to 10 and all, Deena, the little goddess that she is in her little fucking bra and panties that look very like sexual brown panties. And she's just like "mmmm". And that's about as—as like—as intense as a got like a 10. Like, as you're pushing him out. So let's have a whole fucking podcast about that because that is not, that was not a part of my journey. I'm screaming like a fucking wild animal.

**Deena** [00:14:58] You were. I loved it!

**Kristin** [00:15:00] [Laughter] We both were at each other's births. We're weird, but it's just a thing. So you give birth to little Coco? Little, sweetheart. And then—And you've had the talks, right? You've had the talk, and you're like—

**Deena** [00:15:10] Not only have we had the talks, we've been through this before.

**Kristin** [00:15:10] This is the plan. We been through it before. This is not going to happen. I remember you telling me you were like, If this happens again, we will—I will not survive it. Like, not only will we not like. I know I'm better off probably without him, but I personally cannot do it again. And so he has to because I didn't I didn't line up to help. I'm not doing that because he's going to support me. Right. I'm confident about this. Then what happens?

**Deena** [00:15:34] He took the time off. He took the time off. So we've learned from the past lessons, right? We are so fucking aligned. We have a plan. And that plan goes so far off track. Where it's like he literally just went right back into work, even though he had time off. I don't fucking understand that still. And I basically it was the exact same thing where it's like me alone taking care of a baby day in, day out, like trying to recover my fucking bleeding body. And now I have a toddler, now I have a toddler who also is just hanging on me at every moment.

**Kristin** [00:16:07] He is a baby by the way, when you say a toddler, he's still under two.

**Deena** [00:16:09] He was sixteen months old. I had two babies. And yeah, the exact same thing happened. It was like honestly, just devastating.

**Kristin** [00:16:16] Mm hmm.

**Deena** [00:16:18] And that, again, was like a pivotal moment where I'm like, What are we doing and what am I doing? Because I have one fucking life to live. And I don't feel supported and I don't feel loved. And I know I deserve better than this. Like, I know I should have a partner and I deserve to have a partner who, like, cares about me and wants to be with the family, can have a little joy, can be excited. And this isn't it.

**Kristin** [00:16:43] Mm hmm. And I remember you saying after Cohen was born, but in hindsight, how guilty you felt that you didn't really connect with Cohen. And I didn't connect with my second, by the way. And I mean, I think anybody who's been there feels incredibly fucking guilty about that, even though there's nothing you can do. It's not you. It's postpartum anxiety. Maybe it's postpartum depression, whatever it may be. But I remember you telling me you had so much guilt and also so much anger, so much anger at him, not just for Cohen, but also Hunter's, that you feel like you missed the baby stage because you basically had to go into, like combat mode. You just like—

**Deena** [00:17:22] You say that and I can't even remember either of their first few months like, it's gone. I don't remember a single thing. I was just in sheer rage mode. Rage of like, how the fuck is this happening again? Not only that, I mean, you know, Co-co had feeding problems, so just day in, day out, I was in survival mode by myself, trying to get through it, Just pushing everything deep, deep down to, like, keep going, keep going. We can't give up, like, got to take care of the baby. And that was it. That was it. And so while that happened, I admit, like, I totally shut down. And the crazy part is my husband is now at a point where he's in therapy. He's like, we should try. I'm like, I've been trying for two

straight years to make this better. And you did not meet me halfway. So now I'm a little shut down. I'm like, I know I have to meet you halfway, but I'm fucking exhausted from this.

**Kristin** [00:18:12] And my marriage is far from perfect. It is far from perfect. And I just feel like nobody talks about how hard marriage is in general. So we found a little research for you, which is studies have found 90%. 90 fucking percent. Should I repeat that 90% of parents are unhappier with their marriage after having kids. Holy shit. And 60% said they're less confident that they can work through their problems. Oof. The current divorce rate is hovering around 40% for married couples, which is actually a touch lower than I thought. So that's interesting. Fascinating. And this is the part that I think is very interesting. Studies also show that women take on most of the child caring as they're born to kids get stronger, many of their other relationships deteriorate. That rings true for you.

**Deena** [00:19:05] That feels right. Yeah. It's crumbling if you will. Deteriorating. Yes.

**Kristin** [00:19:09] [Laughter]

**Deena** [00:19:11] Hanging on by a thread. I think about divorce every day. [Laughter]. Is that fine? It's just like low-key in the background.

**Kristin** [00:19:18] [Laughter]. Okay, if I may, now that we're joking, because that's actually our job. Our response is laughter, Right? Laughter and jokes, if I may. Let's leave it up with this, which is [laughter]

**Deena** [00:19:26] I know what you're going to say.

**Kristin** [00:19:28] Which is when we arrive to Cohen's first birthday party, because you guys made it. I mean, you made it to his first birthday party. You did it.

**Deena** [00:19:34] Shockingly.

**Kristin** [00:19:34] Yeah, you did it. So we all my family, my husband and my kids, three kids, we come to go into Cohen's birthday party night. One moment, the two of you, you and Mike are in the kitchen. You're doing whatever. You're making the food, whatever it may be. And you're like, you almost didn't make it like, you almost didn't make it to be invited to this party. You know, it was almost just that smidge just so close to being me, the two boys, my nanny's, and we're all singing around the table. And he's like, No, he's laughing. He's like, I really did. I really did. I can't believe it. Like, I almost was in Malibu, like, at my house and I'm like, FaceTiming in, like. Happy birthday Cohen, happy birthday, dude. We'll see with the summer boys.

**Deena** [00:20:22] Boys! Come say hi to your dad. He wants to say happy birthday to you. Okay, We got to go. Say bye to Daddy. I got to go. We're gonna go open gifts now.

**Kristin** [00:20:30] Bye bye, Daddy. Tyler and I, my husband and I, we're just we're in the kitchen and our jaw, I mean, and we get down like we've been through some trauma, like we love some dark shit, and we're just like, Holy fucking shit. You guys are laughing hysterically. It's like, I really—I really did. Like, I really did almost be in Malibu. So it's. It is fucked up. [Laughter]

**Deena** [00:20:55] The whole thing's fucked up. I'm going to be honest, it's been just a long ass journey. I'm tired. And I still don't know what's going to happen.



**Kristin** [00:21:02] I feel like that's where we end, right? I mean, that's where we wrap up is, like we said, we don't ever see these conversations. There's no perfect bow. Like, you're not going to get a divorce tomorrow, right? Like, this isn't. You're just in limbo. And that's how it ends.

**Deena** [00:21:16] I'm in limbo because I'm not ready to give up yet. He's actually trying. Yeah, I admit I need to do my part and, like, have a little bit more of an open mind right now. I'm trying. But I do remember it's like those days where we did vibe and we clicked. I was like, you are my fucking soul mate. Like, Let's do this. Let's ride it out together. And I'm not ready to see, like, if we can't get there, you know? And one of the big things, like, I'm a therapist, I know that divorce is not going to fuck up kids necessarily. I still think about that. I'm like, oh my God, my kids. Like, I know that's not true. Yeah, but it's in the back of my mind. And then I think the biggest thing too, in the times where I'm like, I know that probably separating is the right move for me and my health and then ultimately my family, because having happy parents, healthy thing for a kid.

**Kristin** [00:22:04] That's what we know. Yeah.

**Deena** [00:22:05] I know, but the thought of like not having my boys around. Ohh, I feel it inside like my stomach drops.

**Kristin** [00:22:11] Does it? Well, I think a little reassurance for anybody who is listening or going through the same thing. I can speak to this myself as a child of two parents who stayed together for the kids. I can't speak to everything, obviously I'm only one fucking person. But my parents, they separated for one year of my life, my one year of my childhood. I think it was 11 or I was 12. My dad got a shitty little apartment. It was the best fucking year of my life. It was the best year of my life.

**Kristin** [00:22:40] It was the first time that my life was not chaos and fighting and at odds and hiding and all of the things that come with two parents that you can feel whether you're doing it. They would close their doors. They thought I was asleep. You know, they it wasn't always with me around. You fucking know what's going on as a kid. And that year was the best goddamn year. And for me, if they would have separated, I can't even imagine how much better my life, my childhood and now my adulthood would have been, how much less damaged I would be at this point. So I hear you, Deena. I think you're working on it and that's all you can do, right? And at the end of the day, that little voice that's like stay together for the kids, you know? Right. You know, as a therapist like that part is probably not quite the truth.

**Deena** [00:23:31] Yeah. Yeah. No, we're doing the work. I don't know what's going to happen. We're going to leave it at that.

**Kristin** [00:23:36] All right. Leaving it. Okay. Okay.

**Deena** [00:23:47] Okay. Well, this is really like the true essence of parenting where shit can literally be falling apart in the background, and—and you still have to show up in parent word every fucking day. Every day off.

**Kristin** [00:24:01] Every blessed day.

**Deena** [00:24:02] Yep, yep, yep, yep. So let's jump into a few questions that people send in.

**Kristin** [00:24:06] Yep. All right. So Maurin said, How do you handle everyone announcing babies after loss? I can't escape it. It's daily.

**Deena** [00:24:17] Oh, you went through this too.

**Kristin** [00:24:18] Yes. Do you remember this? Okay. After my miscarriage, I felt like a fucking crazy person. Can I just say that I felt like a crazy person? I probably was right. Your hormones are all over the place. Nobody talks about the fact that you're actually post-partum whenever you go through a loss, no matter how far along your pregnancy loss is. And I very, very, very, very clearly remember the day that Kylie Jenner announced her second pregnancy. And I was just bubble, didn't I bubble it in? But in the end, time like that is fucked up. How could she make a real like this? This is this is how is this even allowed on Instagram? You know, just absolutely irrational. I remember going to dinner with my husband and it was maybe a week after, so this was fresh.

**Kristin** [00:24:59] I remember going to dinner with my husband. We're sitting at this really nice restaurant, by the way. The table next to us actually follows us at the time, and I didn't know it until afterwards. I'm sobbing through the whole dinner, but at one point I go and fuck Kylie Jenner, and I slammed my hands down at the table right when the waiter comes by and he's like, Oh, hi, Yeah, I don't like her either. You know? I feel like no one really talks about how after loss you will see pregnancy announcements, you will see babies everywhere and you are not crazy. You are not alone to be irrationally angry, irrationally sad because it's not irrational.

**Kristin** [00:25:35] It's actually very rational. The only advice I have is that you cannot control who is going to suddenly announce. It sucks. I wish that there could be a way that somebody could go on your phone and mute them in advance, but that's not going to happen. However, once that happens, you do not need to feel an ounce of guilt just hitting that mute button. You don't have to even unfollow somebody. You can hit the mute button. This could be your friend from high school. This could be your best friend. This could be a celebrity. Hit the mute button. Take care of yourself. Come back to it when you're ready.

**Deena** [00:26:08] One hundo. Okay. Another question is how do you handle the implications at screen time emits from our children, and is it really worth the few minutes of freedom we get while they're watching? That's a good question. Behaviors I'm seeing in my almost two year old and four year old: more nagging, negative attention seeking, taking a lot longer for them to break into playing again and just an overall bad mood immediately after watching. Am I the only one dealing with this? Totally good point. No.

**Kristin** [00:26:39] You're not the only one. Pretty much every answer is no, you're not the only one dealing with this, by the way, no matter what you ask us, I just want you to know that, first of all.

**Deena** [00:26:45] First of all, I mean, I just want to empower you to listen to your gut, like, as a parent, you know best if screen time feels like it's backfiring on you, like, fuck that shit. You can ditch it.

**Kristin** [00:26:57] You can ditch it. Or if you're like, this is terrible, but God, I need the fucking break. Let's spitball. Okay. What is your child watching and how long are they

watching it for? Quality matters so much actually, in terms of the brain and what is getting stimulated and what is happening during the time that they are looking at that screen. We love anything that is on PBS. We call it Sesame Street. There's ones for older kids. I mean, it runs the gamut. It's not just little Daniel Tiger and Sesame Street. PBS shows, those are great options. For a little while there, when my daughter was really little, I could tell a difference after watching different kinds of movies, how they affected her. So maybe tune in on how long and what you're watching and how that affects your child.

**Deena** [00:27:44] Definitely. And then when it comes to screen time, we can just expect more pushback from our kids if we have been wavering on the boundaries of when we're going to end it, if we're like, okay, one more episode, and then that one ends and you're like your kids crying because they want more and you're like, Oh fuck, fuck, fuck, Like, just stop crying.

**Kristin** [00:28:04] Like, I just got to have dinner on the table here on more.

**Deena** [00:28:05] Here one more, one more. Look its starting!

**Kristin** [00:28:07] This time I mean it. Look, this time I need it. I mean it this time. Just five more minutes. Okay? Been there. Been there. But Deena's absolutely correct in this where you're going to see after you end screen time, kind of what you're describing, where it's like, God, this is a fucking nightmare. Like, what is going on? Well, every time that we kind of give in or we're wavering on those boundaries because let's face it, we're exhausted. Every time we do that, we're actually ramping up the push back every time because our child is learning cause and effect.

**Kristin** [00:28:38] They're learning how the world works. So they're learning, okay, what happens when I do this right? And it's not manipulation. That's not what it is. It's literally their job. It's literally where their brain is at developmentally to figure out when I do X, when I cry, when I have a tantrum, when I do this, I get five more minutes, Right? Two plus two equals four. Okay. Next time I'm going to cry longer, harder. And it's not logical. They're not actually thinking this, but this is what is happening behind the scenes.

**Deena** [00:29:08] They are not plotting and planning against you.

**Kristin** [00:29:10] But it's happening, right? They're understanding cause and effect. And so stick to that boundary. Have a loving limit. It's time to be done with iPad. I know you're so sad about this. It's okay to feel sad and we're all done. Do you want to go do bubbles? Do you want to go play in the backyard? Do whatever you do, let them have the feelings, but stick to those boundaries. You're going to see way less pushback, way less meltdowns when it's done.

**Deena** [00:29:34] And it's okay if they're upset. You're going to support them through it.

**Kristin** [00:29:38] All feelings are okay. Yep. Number three, this is from Kelly. Hey, Kelly. Kelly says, How do you have date night when you don't have a sitter?

**Deena** [00:29:47] Oh, this happened to you for a long time.

**Kristin** [00:29:48] Oh, my God the longest time.

**Deena** [00:29:50] And, well, me too. But we didn't even attempt dates. So you go, you take it. I didn't want to date. I'm mad!

**Kristin** [00:29:58] I desperately wanted a date. My partner and I feel like roommates. We need that spark back, but we have no one to watch the kids. Help. Okay, First of all, I don't know. The sparks ever really come. I just want to say that, right? And maybe it does. I mean, maybe there's somebody we can bring in to get the spark spark back. But I think, like loving connection and feeling good, you know, that can happen.

**Deena** [00:30:19] Talking to each other. Looking each other in the eye. That's interesting. [Laughter] You take it. Back to you.

**Kristin** [00:30:27] It's a little more than that. [laughter]

**Deena** [00:30:30] I'll take anything.

**Kristin** [00:30:32] My point is, maybe it's not going to be the pre kid's spark. You are just, like, ravaging each other. You are on the street of Mexico, for example. You were there, Deena, you're at my wedding, your boobs are out, and you were just spark. You know, maybe we're not having that on a Wednesday while our kids are sleeping. However, I do think it is so important, and when my husband and I, first five years of our kids life A) financially, we could not afford a babysitter. B) we had absolutely no family that was helpful, which we can get into on a different episode and C) I had debilitating postpartum anxiety with both of my first two kids and there was no fucking way anyone else was taking care of those kids.

**Kristin** [00:31:15] Because postpartum anxiety, if you know, you're running through every scenario of how those kids are going to die the second that you leave. So for those reasons, we never had a babysitter. But every single week, no matter what, my husband, bless his soul, would cook usually my favorite food after the—Deena, are you angry? Is this—

**Deena** [00:31:40] What's that like?

**Kristin** [00:31:40] Do you need to take a minute?

**Deena** [00:31:40] Did you see it in my eyes?

**Kristin** [00:31:40] [Laughter] I'm watching Deena, the rage just like inside of her body.

**Deena** [00:31:49] Okay. That's interesting. Keep going.

**Kristin** [00:31:53] Your kids are in bed. And, you know, for the record, by the way, I'm doing both of the kids bedtimes, which is very hard, by the way. But that way he can set up, he can make this romantic moment, He can light some candles. I'm not even looking at Deena, I'm closing my eyes. He can cook our favorite meal. By the time I come down after bedtime. I'm not so exhausted. It's not 10 p.m.. We are not out on the town, but on a summer day we can go outside, we have candles, we have the monitor and we connect and Oh, my God— I open my eyes and Deena is fucking livid. Mike, I'm scared for what happens to you when you go home.

**Deena** [00:32:27] Are you listening, Mike? Take notes.

**Kristin** [00:32:31] That's my suggestion. It's not perfect. Now, by the way, for the record, we do get a babysitter. I trust her with my life. I literally think she might be a better caretaker than even I am, which is astounding, because I think I'm pretty damn good. And we do go out for date nights and it is in-credible. I feel for you if you're in a spot, whether it's financially, whether it is because of postpartum anxiety, which is a lot more common than people talk about, of not doing date night because of postpartum anxiety our DM's get just like swarmed with it.

**Kristin** [00:33:05] Whatever your reasoning is, I'm with you and my advice is make that connection time and make it. It is not optional. I don't care who has norovirus. Well, in that case, probably shop it. I don't care who has whatever they have. It's been a busy day, long day at work. It's Wednesday or it's Saturday. We're doing date night at home. It's simple, that connection. You can still have it at home.

**Deena** [00:33:28] Yeah. You and I have no family out here either, so setting up the care is really—

**Kristin** [00:33:33] Technically my whole family is out here. But that's a podcast. That's a that's a separate that's a trauma episode that we'll get into.

**Deena** [00:33:38] I've cut it off so much that, like in my mind you also have no family out here.

**Kristin** [00:33:41] Didn't even actually register for you, did it? All right, great. Okay, Well, I'm just going to say something out loud, and that is that I'm fucking exhausted.

**Deena** [00:33:50] Me too.

**Kristin** [00:33:50] Okay.

**Deena** [00:33:51] I'm dying. My like to the bones it hurts.

**Kristin** [00:33:54] Llike this was so fun. This is non-negotiable. We need to do this every week. I feel like my cup was just filled to the brim. And now that it's full, now I feel like it's time to shut my body down. I need to go crawl into bed. I need to put on Real Housewives, not talk to anyone.

**Deena** [00:34:12] Agreed. My cup is overflowing. It's spilling. I got to go. I just got to go to bed.

**Kristin** [00:34:16] We got to go. We don't need anymore spilling. All right. Thank you so much for listening. This has been honestly a highlight of my week. I don't know about yours.

**Deena** [00:34:27] Me too! God!

**Kristin** [00:34:27] I love this.

**Kristin** [00:34:33] If you are struggling with toddler or preschooler tantrums, push back discipline, picky eating, just all the confusing things. This podcast. We can only scratch the surface if you need help. Our course winning the toddler stage is here to help. It is aptly

nicknamed the Toddler manual because it truly has every single thing you could possibly struggle with under the sun between the ages of one and six within one course, we're not going to do a bunch of workshops.

**Kristin** [00:35:07] You have to buy the sleep guide and the picky eater guide and no this guide into that guide know everything you could possibly need for ages. One through six is all in this one course. We were never meant to do this parenting thing alone. You deserve to have help. We are here for you. You can find that course at big little feelings dot com and be sure to follow us on Instagram and Facebook at big little feelings. We give free tips every single day. They might change your life.

**Deena** [00:35:35] Thank you so much for being here with us. This has been Audacy Production, Executive produced by Lauren LoGrasso, produced by Daniela Silva, edited by Bob Tabaddor, 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 till next week.