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With Your Host

Devon Clement

Ep #17: Enneagram: Your Secret Weapon for Saving Your Sanity With Liz Orr

Do you want to learn a simple tool that can help you understand yourself and your children better and make you a happier, more calm and confident parent? Stay tuned for a very exciting podcast episode

Welcome to *Parenthood Prep*, the only show that helps sleep-deprived parents and overwhelmed parents-to-be successfully navigate those all-important early years with their baby, toddler, and child. If you are ready to provide the best care for your newborn, manage those toddler tantrums, and grow with your child, you're in the right place. Now here's your host, baby and parenting expert, Devon Clement.

Hello and welcome back to *Parenthood Prep*, the podcast that prepares you for parenthood. I am so excited today for two reasons. Number one, I am going this evening to see *Jellicle Ball*, which is the new remake of *Cats*, off-Broadway. It takes place in the queer Ballroom scene, and it is getting rave reviews. I love *Cats*.

It was the first musical I saw on Broadway when I was a kid. I was fortunate to grow up close enough to New York that we could come in and see shows. I know it gets some eye rolls, but it is one of my favorite shows. I'm so excited to see it in its new treatment tonight, which I think is going to be fantastic.

The other reason is that we have a guest on the podcast, and it is another one of my favorite people in the world. It is Liz, or Elizabeth Orr, as it says on her book cover. She is an Enneagram teacher, coach and author, and she just put out a book called the *Unfiltered Enneagram*. You may know her from her Instagram page, Rude Ass Enneagram, which is how I got to know her.

Fortunately, we were able to work together on some coaching and become friends, so we have her here today. I'm so excited to talk about how the Enneagram comes into play when you are becoming a parent and in the early days of parenting. How knowing and understanding your own Enneagram type can be super, super helpful, in terms of everything that's going on, all the changes you're going through, what advice to follow, what not to follow, how to know when you're doing the right thing, and all that kind of stuff.

Devon Clement: So, hello Liz.

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Liz Orr: Devon, hello. It's so good to see you and it's so good to be here.

Devon: Yes. Thank you so much. I am so stoked that you are a famous author and you're here on the podcast. I feel so lucky.

Liz: I'm just an author so far.

Devon: So, why don't you give us a brief overview for people who may not know what Enneagram is. I'm sure you've been asked this a million times and you have your little... Explain it to me like I'm dumb.

Liz: The Enneagram, in very broad strokes, is a wonderful framework for self-awareness, for self-compassion, and for compassion for others. It is comprised of nine distinct worldviews, nine distinct beliefs and fears, nine distinct defense mechanisms, and nine distinct emotional ruts that we get into. They're all equally valid. As you go around the Enneagram symbol and you start to talk about all nine types...

Devon: Just to interject, the types are the numbers 1-9.

Liz: Yes.

Devon: But they're not in any kind of quality order.

Liz: No, they're not. They're all perfect tens. Yeah, so as you kind of go around the Enneagram circle... We can all agree that each type is correct, to some degree, about what they believe about the world. Also, it's not the full scope. But it helps us understand why we protect ourselves in the way that we do, and it can help us see that we don't always have to protect ourselves in that way. That we actually have a lot more choice than we think we have, most times.

Devon: I love that. I think for me, understanding my own type has been so helpful in some of the things that I maybe was angry about myself for, or berated myself for. Like, "Oh, why can't I ever just make a decision? Why can't I decide on something? Why can't I finish a project?"

And then it's like, "Oh, you're a 7, and it's not an excuse. It's not, "Oh, well, you never have to finish a project, ever." But it's like, now you can understand why

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you do those things, and that it's okay, and that you can work towards finding an equilibrium that you like. Without being like, "Well, I have to turn into a completely different type of person who settles on things, finishes projects, and moves from one thing to another without getting distracted by a million other things."

Liz: That's exactly right. It gives us insight into why we have become the way we have, and that we had good reason to become the way that we have, right? To use you as an example, since we're just going to dive right in. Sevens, they see the world in terms of such potential and promise, there's possibility around every corner, and that is exciting and thrilling to them. But what they also are correct about, in terms of the world, is that it's a very disappointing place where a lot of potential gets wasted.

And so, you can understand why they chase for the next thing, or that easy distractibility comes into play when 7s are torn between the knowledge of how wonderful things could be and the awareness of how often those things don't measure up. And so, of course they're chasing the next high to medicate the disappointment. They constantly feel it.

Devon: It is true., I think there's obviously so much to talk about here, and people should read your book or listen to the audio, which you read yourself, so they can hear more of your lovely voice. Could I ask you to do something that you're going to hate? Could you give us the quickest run-through of each type?

Liz: I don't hate that at all. Okay, I just feel like it's so robust, but I can give the quick and dirty. Okay, what I'm going to do is something that the type 1s hate, which is I'm going to start with type 8. And the reason that I start with 8... I start with it in the book as well... is that each enneagram type falls into what's known as a "center".

There are three centers within the enneagram. We, as human beings, have all three of these centers of intelligence, these processing centers. But we lead with one of them based on what our type is.

And so, we start in the body center, which is comprised of types 8-9-1. The body-based intelligence that we all have is like when we get goosebumps out of

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nowhere, or the hair on the back of our neck stands up, right? Our body is absorbing something and telling us something. Maybe it's beyond words, but it's an intelligence. It's a type of intelligence that we have.

Type 8 is the beginning of the body center. They are often referred to as The Challenger or The Protector. These are, frankly, the badasses of the enneagram.

Devon: She says, an 8 herself.

Liz: I do. I do say that. I claim it. I'm surrounded by 8 in my life, and I love it. It's great when you're on the right side of an 8. We are a nightmare however, when we get a little bit pissed off. The beautiful thing about the 8 is this big protective energy. They look out for the underdog. They're really comfortable in the driver's seat.

But the suffering for the 8, and for everybody else, is that they're really uncomfortable with their vulnerability. They're really afraid, it's not even a discomfort. "This will be exploited." And so, everything that is soft and tender within them, they bury, they hide away. They reject it themselves so that nobody can get access to it and take advantage of it. That's your 8.

The next type in the body center, that's type 9. They are often referred to as The Peacemakers or The Mediators. I would contend that they are the most well-liked on the enneagram. People love them because they're kind of the human equivalent of a chill pill. They're really, really grounding. They're oriented towards reconciling and bringing broken pieces back together, They're very grounded and sturdy people.

The suffering for the 9 is that they don't believe that they matter. They think that connection is really fragile and that they are not important enough to hold on to. And so, they tend to just numb themselves out to any kind of desire within them, or intense emotion within them that might rock the boat. They just endure, endure, endure, in their relationships. It's just incredibly painful. And when they do finally explode, which happens years down the line, it's messy because it's usually not over the thing they're actually upset about.

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Devon: Yeah, I have some friends that are 9s, and you're right. They're so lovable, but at the same time they're so incredibly conflict avoidant that if there's any kind of hint of anything going on they get so uncomfortable. That's interesting because I feel like 8 is the opposite. They seek out the conflict. They have no problem with it. My sister's one, so I'm very familiar with that.

That's interesting that they are in the same center but so different. I'm curious, after you're done with 1, I would love to hear how each one you could see playing out in parenting.

Because as you're talking about it, I'm just thinking of all these situations where if you're a 9 as a parent and your kids are fighting with each other, you're just leaving the room and crying in the corner because you don't want them to be doing that anymore. And realizing that that's something that you can work with, that you can change.

Or you're an 8 as a parent, and you're picking fights with your partner because the baby pooped all over the changing table, or whatever.

Liz: I can touch on all that.

Devon: Yeah, I could also see how 1 would be interesting as a parent, because that's the rule follower, right?

Liz: Yeah, 1 is The Perfectionist or The Reformer.

Devon: Which let me tell you, it's super easy to do when there are 10 million zillion parenting books and pieces of advice and pediatricians and experts trying to tell you the right way to do everything.

Liz: Yeah, that's a real easy way to be in the world. The Perfectionist, The Reformer, is our type 1. I like to say about 1s is that they are the stubborn optimists of the enneagram. They really and truly know in their bones that the world can be a better place; we can all do better. But they are so incredibly frustrated that nobody seems willing to put forth the effort to do better except for them.

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So, their suffering is in this incredibly high standard that they hold themselves to. That they are human and can't hit it all the time, and they believe that there's actually something within them that prevents them from being good enough to be deserving of love. So, it's an incredible amount of pressure that they put on themselves that then kind of results in general misery.

Devon: Yeah, I could really see that coming into play a lot with parenting, especially in the early days. How much do we feed? How do we follow sleep safety, and the car seat safety? And safety-safety-safety. Which is super important, but can get a little crazy about it. "They should be sleeping. They're not sleeping. They should be on the schedule. They're not on the schedule," just burying yourself in "shoulds".

Liz: Yeah, so all three types in the body center have a really specific relationship with anger. The 1s, it's a double bind. They really struggle with it because they feel righteously angry about a lot, right? One of the things they believe to be true about the world is that it's a real mess.

But anger can be destructive, it can be irrational, it can be messy. So, they don't feel like they have the freedom to express the anger that they feel. Which, again, can really set them up for an exhausting experience of parenting, of anything really. But if you're pissed, but you feel like you can't say anything about it or do anything about it, all you can do is swallow this anger.

And then it just builds, and again comes out misdirected. And then they feel bad about themselves because they weren't able to control that anger. And really, that's the crux of the parenting struggle for the 8-9-1, is around control. All three of these types have very strong feelings and guardedness around their boundaries and their autonomy, their ability to control their lives.

For 8s, they're going to be pretty belligerently defensive of their autonomy. So, when things are not going their way, they're going to fight it. They're going to see it as a battle of will, and they're going to get pretty ferocious. And that can just send a parent down a shame spiral when they realize, "Oh, no. I just exploded over something that really was not worth that explosion because I felt out of control."

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Devon: There are so many moments in parenting when you feel completely out of control. Especially in the early days, when you have a baby and you can't expect them to do anything.

Liz: Yeah, it's a mirror to your vulnerability. You actually don't have as much control as you think you do, and that is miserable for everyone. Particularly for 8-9-1.

The 9 is going to sort of react in a very different way when they're confronted with their lack of control. They're going to disengage. Like you said, they can be really conflict averse. They can really do a lot to numb themselves out of their own feelings, and so they're going to just kind of disappear. Not even necessarily physically, but just check out emotionally from the thing. Become a little bit paralyzed and unable to take a step towards what needs to happen because they're feeling so overwhelmed and out of control.

So, the 9's struggle with parenting can look like just sort of disengaging for the sake of keeping everybody else peaceful, but not really speaking up for themselves, kind of losing their own identity, their own selves and what they desire, and their needs, and just checking out of difficult moments because it's too much to bear.

And then you've got 1. And as we were saying, control again is the issue there. Just like 8 and 9. It's about "I can't seem to do enough to get things right, to make things better." And so, 1s have this tendency to really dig their heels in and insist, "No, no, I'm correct here. I know what is right."

They exhaust themselves by just sort of stubbornly doubling down on what they believe to be the right path. Rather than surrendering. Rather than giving themselves a break, maybe they don't have to correct this situation and someone else can help them. So, that's where some real struggle and suffering can come in for the 1 parent.

Devon: Yeah, I could see that. Just as you're talking, so many examples are coming to me. For instance, with the 9 you have all these well-meaning people in your life giving you advice; your mom, your mother-in-law, your neighbors,

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your aunt, your sister, your friends with kids, your friends without kids, your boss, your partner's boss.

“Oh, why aren't you doing things this way? That way? The other way?” And then you can't please everybody, you can't follow everyone's advice the way that they want you to, so you just can completely shut down and check out. That could be really frustrating.

I think that's something, where if you understand that that's who you are, and that's what your type is, you can cope with that. With the 1s, I was thinking of, for instance, something like body feeding, breastfeeding, chest feeding, whatever we call it. You don't have a ton of control over how that goes. There are certainly things you can do to set yourself up for success, but at the end of the day your body and your baby are individuals, and they're going to do what they're going to do.

And if you feel like “this is the way. This is what I want to be doing,” either your body or your baby is not cooperating. That can, I'm sure, be extremely frustrating.

Liz: That is a place where, again, 1 can often struggle to forgive themselves. And so, such a supportive thing for a 1, anyone, whether they're a parent or not, is the practice of self-forgiveness. That's a great example of a place where recognizing that for a lot of it, it's outside of your control. It's not actually reflective of a failing within you.

And granting yourself that compassion can really help release some of that suffering and kind of help you move forward. Rather than getting stuck in, “I'm a bad parent because I can't perform this particular thing that I think is right.”

Devon: Yeah, 100%. And that self-compassion piece I think is so important for all the types. We were talking about in the beginning, giving yourself a break. Just because you're not the mom next door, or the mom at yoga class, or the dad at the park, or the dad at yoga class, or whatever, that they're just a different person with different circumstances and a different kid; all those things are different.

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Liz: Yeah, well that's one of the lovely things about the enneagram. It really clearly demonstrates... There are more than 9. But even if we just stick with the very basic framework of 9 types... there are 9 different types of parents that are suffering in 9 distinct ways, and are thriving in 9 distinct ways.

And so, even just that very baseline understanding can help re-center us and help us recognize, "Of course I'm not parenting the way my sister did, or my mother did," or whatever, right? "Of course there's variance here, and what they struggled with I'm going to struggle with differently."

Devon: Totally. And you know, not for nothing, it also helps you understand other people, and gives you compassion for them as well. Even if you don't necessarily know what their type is. Just saying, "This is how I do things because this is my type. But they're a different type, and they're going to do things their way, even if it's not the way I think they should." So, I just think it's so valuable.

And just to jump aside for a second, because I'm thinking about kids now. We had talked about this a little bit before we jumped on. It's not like astrology, where your kid is born and you're like, "They're a Scorpio," or whatever. It's something that sort of develops over time, or that you understand better in yourself over time.

So, you can't necessarily type your baby or your two-year-old or your five-year-old or whatever, right? And so much of it is self-reflection and self-typing.

Liz: That's the whole point. The journey to land on type, it's an internal journey. It's not something we can do for others. I said this to you before we started recording, but I think it's still valuable to speak the language of the enneagram even while your kids are young. If all you're doing is just talking about how it's helpful to you, that's powerful for your kids to hear and witness.

But it's also great to teach kids this language and these practices of self-awareness and self-reflection. And hold what they say loosely, because we are all figuring out who we are, but they especially are in a tender, squishy place with that. But what a gift to be able to give to your kids.

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Like, “Hey, as a parent, these are the things I’m thinking about, and reflecting on, and trying to take accountability around in my own life and relationships. This has been a framework that's been super helpful for me.”

Devon: Yeah, I love that. And I think that even if you don't necessarily know exactly what their type is, you can see behaviors and you can see these ways that they react to things, and say, “Well, the way that I would respond to an adult who is reacting this way, thanks to my understanding of enneagram, is to do this.”

Because obviously there would only be 9 types of people, if we were all the absolute perfect avatar of each type at all times. It would be like *Battlestar Galactica* with the six robots or whatever; there were just copies and copies. So, I think that can be so helpful to say, “Okay, my kid is not the same as me. They are reacting in this way, they're behaving in this way, and here's how I'm going to respond to it; the way that I understand to do that.”

Liz: Right. This is where I know that this type needs compassion and here's how I can bring that into how I'm experiencing my kid right now.

Devon: I have a great relationship with my mom and I had a great childhood, but parents are parents and they give us all hang ups and send us to therapy and everything. But I think our biggest conflicts came from her just not understanding that I was not going to be just like her. That she could keep her room clean and organized and I couldn't, and she didn't understand why.

There are a lot of reasons for that; neurodiversity and different things, personality, and this and that. And I think it was so frustrating for her to be like, “Why can't she just do these things that are so easy for me?” And I was like, “Why can't I just do these things that are so easy for her? Why can't I come into the house quietly and speak with a soft voice? And not thunder up and down the stairs like an elephant?” Which she used to accuse me of doing all the time.

I think that just acknowledging that can be so huge and so helpful. And of course, in your relationship with your partner as well. They're not going to parent the same way you are. They're not going to react to the same things you are. If you each know your type it can be really nice to kind of divide and conquer. Like,

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“I don't want to break up the kids' fights. I don't like that. You can do that, and I'll get the gifts for the moms and grandmas.”

So, what's the next group? What's the next center?

Liz: The next center is the heart center; our little Care Bears of the enneagram. That is made up of types 2-3-4. And similar to the body center, we all have that heart center of intelligence. That is that place within us that is moved by other people, by beauty, by emotion, right? Like when we feel our heart being moved, right? That's our emotional intelligence stirring within us. The 2-3-4 lead with that.

The 2 is often referred to as The Nurturer or The Provider. These are the real soft and squishy teddy bears of the enneagram. They have this beautiful gift of being able to anticipate exactly what is missing within us that is going unmet. Meeting it and just making us feel really, really loved by taking care of us.

But their suffering is that they look around the world and they see there is not enough love for everyone. And “I had better earn whatever love I can experience in this life.” They do that by being generous to the point of martyrdom, right? I have to provide, provide, provide, and I have to never ask for anything in return so that I'm not burdening anyone else.

And so, they tend to squash down their needs. They overextend themselves too far. But there is this sort of unconscious transactional receipt that is growing in their mind with all the ways they have taken care of other people but that has not yet been returned to them. So, they can get very resentful, very frustrated in their relationships. But again, in wanting to be these ultimate sources of unconditional love, they can't express, “Hey, I paid for dinner the last three times we went out. You take me out.” They can't voice that and so it just builds.

Devon: Well, first of all, I think an important note about 2s, is that a lot of women think they're 2s, and they misinterpret themselves as 2s because it is such the classic archetype of the socialized-as-a-woman; care about everybody else, nurture everybody else, take care of people's needs. I mean, there are so many things about 2.

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I'm not at all a 2, but there are things where I'm like, "Oh, yeah, I definitely feel like I should be doing that more." So, I think that there's that piece in every parent who is socialized female particularly, and just parents in general. You want your baby to have the best. You want everything for them, so you give and give and give and give until you have nothing left for yourself, or really, for them; just seeing the resentment.

I have a few friends with older kids, and they'll do these amazing things for their kids. They'll take them on vacation, or they'll take them shopping for the day, or take them to the theme park, or whatever. And then they're like these little ingrates. They don't even care. They don't know, they're kids that don't realize what all you put into this. Frankly, they're probably overtired and overstimulated, and you expect them to just be falling all over themselves.

Liz: And so, is the 2. The 2 is probably also overtired and overstimulated, and has not spoken up for themselves.

Devon: Yeah, so I think that piece of it, it's so common anyway. So then, if you're a 2, it's just compounded.

Liz: Yeah, that's exactly right. I mean, you've just named exactly the common suffering of the type 2 parent, which is overextending themselves and stuffing down their own needs to the point of resentment and frustration and anger. And similar to the 9, when it finally does come out it's really sloppy. Because it's not actually about the thing that they're upset about. It's about all of the things that they did not say they were upset about in the moment.

And so, that's what is really challenging for the 2, particularly as a parent. Like you said, there is sort of built into, baked into being a parent, there is a degree of selflessness and self-sacrifice that has to come into play. And for a type 2 that's going to be such an important place to really, really reflect, and really, really discern, "Where is this an occupational hazard of being a parent, and where is this my ego that's trying to earn love?"

Then we have type 3. I like to call them the superstars of the enneagram. They're just really shiny, dazzling, lovely people. Very charismatic. The beautiful

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gift of the 3 is that they walk into the room and they just kind of reflect the value that exists in the room without having to do anything.

But that's the real key, because the 3s, they're suffering feeling like they have to do things to prove their value. Their worth as a human being is tied up in their productivity and what they can demonstrate as their value. And so, they come to believe they are what they do, and the image becomes incredibly important.

Which as a 3, if your kid is having a meltdown in a public place, that can feel like failure. Because, "Oh, my God, I'm being poorly reflected on because my kid is tired and overstimulated," or whatever it is. So, that's the real suffering for the type 3 parents, the failure being right there on the surface. Being really, really a parent, and they're not being able to manage the image.

Devon: It's almost you know up there with the rule following 1. As like something where kids are really going to rub up against that, and really going to grate on that. If you have an idea about how things are supposed to go, because that's the rules, kids will be like, "Fuck them rules. I'm doing what I want."

And if you have an idea of how things are supposed to go, because that's the image you want to project, kids are going to be like, "Fuck your image. I'm going to... You have all these cute outfits you want to take me out in, I'm going to refuse to wear anything but my Mickey Mouse pajamas every day of my life. And throw a screaming fit if you try to get me to wear something else." That is challenging. That is something that's really difficult to cope with.

Liz: Yes, exactly. And to the 3 it feels like a personal failing. It feels like the image is not perfect and curated. It feels like all of their flaws and all of the things that they are not good at are on display. But embracing that chaos, embracing the fact that you can't actually public relations your way out of parenting, and realizing that those places of imperfection and those places of failure are places where you can actually experience great connection with other parents, and even your kid and your partner.

Devon: That's powerful for the 3. I think that's actually a huge thing, just in parenting and in life. Just looking at the other people doing it and going, "Oh, my God, this shit is crazy. We're all struggling and it's really hard. I might look better

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than you in this way, and you look better than me in that way, but we're all having a tough time.”

Parents will say to me, “Oh, my baby doesn't eat as well. My toddler isn't eating as well as her toddler.” I'm like, “Well, I bet her toddler's not sleeping. Or they do some things good and some things not good.” And we as adults do the same thing. So, I think any type would benefit from communing with others and saying, “This fucking sucks. And we're all in it together.”

Liz: Yeah, yeah. We're all building the plane while we're flying it. And recognizing that, you're right, for every type, is going to be a really powerful way to connect, but also to connect to some compassion. And just remember that we're all just trying to figure this out.

Devon: Yeah, I think it's so easy to have compassion for other people and so much harder to have it for ourselves. There was a meme that a lot of my friends were sharing in 2020, that said, “It's a pandemic, of course things aren't going to get done as well, and people are going to be struggling and all that. And that's okay.” And then it said, my brain, “Not you, though. Me.”

Like, “Oh, well, she just had a brand-new baby. Of course, we're going to support her and rally around her, and if she is covered in spit up and has her hair in a messy bun, we're going to tell her she's beautiful.” But not me, though.

Liz: “I'm a failure for the same things that I'm going to comfort someone else over.” Speaking of internalizing failures, now we have our type 4; our resident, drama, royalty. Type 4s are often referred to as The Romantic or The Individualist. Sometimes they're known as “the tortured artist”. But the type 4s have this beautiful gift of helping us uncover meaning and depth and significance out of the ordinary, out of the boring and the mundane.

But the suffering for the 4 is that they really have come to believe that unless they can make a special impact in the world they are not worthy of love. Their existence has to mean something to everyone, in order for it to matter enough to be loved. And so, anything that they don't have that they perceive other people to have, they kind of internalize that and they define themselves by what they lack, right?

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“I am what I don't seem to be able to have. I am what I am failing at.” And so, there's a lot of envy for the 4. They look and compare themselves to everyone else.

Devon: Which is just a death sentence in parenting. Like, “Oh my God.”

Liz: Exactly. Exactly. It's the fastest way to misery in parenting. To just be like, “Well they seem to have such a great relationship with their kid. Their kid sleeps so well and eats so well. It's because of me that my kid doesn't,” or won't or can't or whatever. Yeah, the suffering is a lot of envy in comparison.

Devon: But also, I think there's that element of ‘well, my kid is different and special, just like I am.’

Liz: Exactly So, all three of the heart center types, the thing that the three of them do, the type 3 gets the worst reputation for it but the 2 and 4 are just as guilty, if they all perform. They all are searching for their value outside of themselves, and so they will shapeshift for their audience to be assured of their worthiness.

And like you said, when things are going wrong for the 4, they are going to shapeshift into, “Well, I'm special and different. And that is what my impact is about.” The 3 does that shapeshifting into, “I am hypercompetent and productive and impressive. I'm the executive who was promoted to partner in my firm with a six-month-old baby.” Overproducing to be assured of their lovability.

And the 2 is the super generous martyr, that's their performance. So, there's all this... Where it was controlled in the body center, for the heart center it's about identity and it's about ‘am I worthy of love?’

Devon: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. I think that that can be especially challenging when your kids are very little. Because they're often not giving anywhere near as much back as you're putting into them. So, that can be really challenging.

And again, people socialized as women, you're not getting that feedback from society either. I mean, it's such a cliché, but a dad walks his kid down the street

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in the stroller and there's practically a red carpet rolled out for him, and a marching band. And the mom walks her kid down the street in the stroller and everyone's like, "You're doing it wrong."

So, when you have these identity struggles already and you're like, "There's just no way for me to do this to society's satisfaction," that's got to be really challenging. I mean dads who are 2-3-4 must have a great time. Or people socialized as men, whether they identify as dads or not, that must be great. Like, "Oh, look at me! I'm going to take my baby outside the house, and I'm going to get roses thrown at my feet."

Liz: True. Although there's suffering in there too for them.

Devon: Oh, for sure. Again, I think with these qualities I feel like we're just talking about this is why it's going to be so hard. But these are the things that when you acknowledge them and you understand them, you can make it easier for yourself. This is a challenge, and now you have the tools and language to accept it and love yourself. That's where the love is going to come from.

Liz: Exactly. If and when you read my book, dear listener...

Devon: You should read it. It's great.

Liz: It's the dead horse that I beat over and over again. Which is, we had reason to become the way that we have become. Twos did get assured of their lovability when they were super generous and took care of everyone else. Threes did feel loved when they were incredibly impressive in collecting all the awards and the accolades. The 4s did earn love because they were special and unique and reminded people of what is special and unique.

So, these things have served us. And they also are such a critical piece of our suffering. And so, remembering, "Oh, yes. This has kept me safe. This has protected me. This has got me what I need," introduces that compassion as we are also looking at, "Oh, my God, this has been driving people up the wall and me up the wall." So, that's the beauty of the enneagram too.

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Devon: Yeah, I mean, ever since I started learning more and more about it, and about my type and everything, I have just really come to understand myself so much better. I'm able to be so much kinder to myself, and to understand other people, which that's really what we want at the end of the day. Just to connect and to understand each other, and to have others understand us.

My friends that are into it and understand it, we'll talk about it like, "Oh, yeah, tell me you're a 1 without telling me you're a 1," or whatever. You just feel so seen and it's really great. Even if what you're being seen by is a meme on Instagram that you put out there. Again, Rude Ass Enneagram. She puts out this stuff... and I mean, obviously I love you and you're my favorite, but there's also a lot of others that obviously you can't boil the whole thing down to one little snippet.

But there's so much that can be conveyed a lot of the time, and it's less dry than reading a long article. Honestly, until your book came out, most of the stuff I read about enneagram was pretty dry and above the head of somebody who is not already kind of an expert. So, I'm so glad that it's out there to be more of a resource for people that's a little more relatable.

Liz: That was the hope I had in writing the book the way that I did. Because you're right, it can be so dense and academic. And that's great, and it's hard to digest when you don't have a basis for it. Or you don't see what it means on the ground. So, I wanted my book to be approachable and accessible and silly. So, that feedback is my favorite feedback, other than, "Fuck you Liz."

Devon: I mean you get a lot of that from me, too. Every time she puts out a new meme I'm like, "Oh, here she is again attacking me personally. Geez, I thought you liked me. That's fine." You know I was texting you throughout as I was listening to the book, "This is exactly this person in my life. This is this person in my life. Oh, that's why they are the way they are."

It's so interesting. And we're not supposed to type other people, but it's hard not to see the qualities of people, who may not have necessarily typed themselves yet, in some of the descriptions. Again, like with your kid, who you also can't type, it just gives you a little bit more of a framework for understanding.

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Liz: It does. Exactly. Again, everyone is like, “Ugh, it's the worst that we can't type other people,” but we can do it in our head. Just don't tell them, and hold it lightly, right?

Same with your kid, put on their journey and they will figure this out in their due time. And right now, what I know about 4s, is that this is what is underneath this behavior that's driving me nuts.

Devon: I think we have more to talk about, but let's just take a little aside and talk about, how do you type yourself? I know there are tests online and stuff. And people are like, “I took the test, and it said this...” But I think unlike a lot of other... I'm not going to call it personality typing systems, but self-identity mechanisms... you can't really take a test for it, right?

Liz: One thing I tell people to do is look at any Instagram accounts and see which ones you find the most relatable.

Devon: I have heard that.

Liz: I have heard people say to me, “I was between these two types, until this post that you put out really hurt my feelings.” So yeah, I think the benefit of these online tests is that they can help narrow down the field, right? They can help eliminate a few options so that you're not sort of chasing down avenues that are not the type that you lead with.

Devon: People ask me because they know I'm pretty well versed in this stuff. They're like, “What type am I?” I'm like, well, you're not this, this, this, or this, so just eliminate those and go from there.

Liz: Right, exactly. That can be helpful. But again, these tests can never be perfectly diagnostic. And so, holding what the result is loosely, and doing the self-reflection and the self-inquiry, is really important. And a question that I like to pose to people when they're trying to figure out their type is, “Who do I think I have to be in order to get my needs met? In order to be deserving of love? In order to get through the day?”

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And what that helps us start to understand, and put language to, is how we think we have to show up, who we've had to become, and what that defensive personality is that has to navigate the world. And when you understand what that is, and each type has a very distinctive, idealized self-image that is that piece that we're pulling out, that can help you hone in on what your type is.

Because type is determined by motivation and not necessarily behaviors. So, understanding how we think we have to show up can help reveal what we think we're protecting ourselves from. And so, that can be a great way to get at, not only our type, but really put some of our language to our type rather than just the generic language of the enneagram. Which is helpful, but is not as specific as the self-reflective work that we then do when we know what our type is.

Devon: Yeah, yeah I like that. And I think it becomes clear pretty quickly when you start to think about it that way. Yes, it was actually funny, years and years ago I took a test on an app that I think is actually a pretty decent one. It's very robust and you have to pay for it. And another friend of mine took it recently, and I'll tell you why it's funny, because I get to the end and it said I was a 7. It gives this description and has quotes, and one of the quotes was 'blah-blah-blah.'

And then it said "Devon, a successful businesswoman." And I was like, "What?" Literally, that was who the quote was from? Some other Devon, who was a 7. But recently a friend of mine took the test and she was like, "Is this you?" "No." I freaked out when I saw it the first time too. It was like 10 years ago, and I was like, "That's amazing. What the fuck?" So, if I wasn't already sure that this is my type then now... It's spooky.

Liz: Yeah, the universe was like 'this is your type.' Anyway, that is how you type yourself. Moving along to the head center... We're in your territory now... So, the head center types are types 5-6-7. Again, we all have this noggin' center of intelligence. We all have a processing, observing, and insight generating, type of intelligence that we exercise in the world. Takes in information and surroundings and possibilities, and puts out something new from that. Whether that's insight or guidance or pathways or patterns.

So, we all have that. And the 5-6-7 excel at these things, and also suffer with these things. The real common suffering for these three types is fear and anxiety

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around the future. And whether or not they can trust themselves to make the right decision in the future.

For the 5, they have this really precise, deep, analytical brain that loves to just plunge to the depths of research, immerse itself completely, and try to understand things to their completion. Like, why do people tick the way they tick? And why do things work the way they work?

Devon: They really can just deep dive for hours into information and research. And there's certainly none of that out there in the parenting world. No opportunities to go absolutely off the cliff of research and expertise, and knowledge and studies, and history.

Liz: Definitely no content out there.

Devon: None.

Liz: So, I mean, that's a great example of how the 5 gets overwhelmed though, right? Because the question of 'can I trust myself to know what the right next step is?' is really plaguing them. And they always feel like 'the thing that I don't know is the missing piece of information that I need in order to make the right decision.' But they don't trust themselves that they've read enough or consumed enough or researched enough to have that missing piece of information.

Fives also get this reputation of being really robotic and stoic. But they're actually real sensitive sweethearts, and it's because they're so sensitive that they tend to protect themselves by being really rational and logical and predictable. Because they're trying to guard themselves from being overwhelmed. Which, certainly, there's nothing to overwhelm a parent, for sure.

Devon: No, no, definitely. It's smooth sailing all the time. Parents are just whelmed just a normal amount.

Liz: So, a schedule is a place where 5s try to exert a lot of control. "I want to know when things start, when things end, so that I know how much energy I can budget for this thing." And as we know, kids are famous for being on time and attentive to schedules.

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Devon: Yes, and knowing when they wake up in the middle of the night exactly how long it's going to take to get them back to sleep. How long it's going to take to get out of the house when we have somewhere to be. I saw an Instagram video the other day where mom was talking about her two-year-old wanting to do everything herself, and she's like, "So, now everything takes 87 times as long."

And I think that is an accurate assessment. I think that is an accurate number. I'm not sure what her scientific research was, but it checks out for me. Yeah, I could see that being so frustrating to deal with, just so much uncertainty, and not knowing that there's no right answer. There just isn't.

Liz: Yeah, and it doesn't matter what you read next or what you look up, you have to make a decision at some point and you have to rely on yourself at some point. And that is terrifying to the 5.

The 6, you mentioned uncertainty, and that's where the real suffering for the six is. I forgot to mention the archetypal name of the 5, which is The Researcher or The Observer.

Devon: I was just going to say, I could see going back to the 5, and this is in no way coming from my place as the partner of a 5, I could see it being a little frustrating if you were one of the more emotional types, the body type or the heart type, being partnered with someone who's a 5. Who's saying, "This is the information. These are the facts," and me being like, "Well, this is what we're looking at here, and it's different."

Liz: Yeah, for sure. And I think, as a partner to a 5, understanding that as their attempt to find reassurance, to find something to hold on to when they are feeling so overwhelmed, can help bring a little compassion to your frustration. And for the 5 recognizing, "Oh, I'm trying to create certainty where it probably doesn't exist. And I'm trying to protect myself from being overwhelmed. But maybe I have more to give to this than just 'here's some facts and figures.'"

So, that's a great case study with the understanding of the enneagram. It can bring in some more compassion into what could be a really frustrating moment.

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Our type 6, our little skeptic, or our guardian, our devil's advocate, ball of anxiety; very loud about their anxiety. They are. They're very like doomsday prepper. These are folks who have Tylenol and Advil in their bag, dry socks and snacks, and an umbrella and sunscreen. They're ready. And charged power banks.

Devon: My ex is a 6; love him to death. And we would like to meet up, and I'd be like, "Oh, can you bring me power banks?" He was always coming from his office. "Can you bring me power banks?" And he kept buying me power banks for me to have. I was like, "You don't understand. The problem is not that I don't own any power banks, it's that they are never charged and they are never with me. And you always have them with you and fully charged. So, if you would just keep loaning me power banks that are fully charged. That'll be great."

Liz: That is hysterical.

Devon: He just really thought that was going to solve the problem.

Liz: And probably, like the fact that that didn't solve the problem, was anxiety inducing to him. Because he's like, "I'm trying to solve the problem. I'm trying to mitigate the problem." And it's like, "No, no, no. You're misunderstanding the problem." That's so funny.

So, 6, they're super, super prepared, and they're really trying to prevent disaster. They see the world as a really dangerous place. Which I think we can all agree, it certainly is. And they are afraid that they do not have the resources within to keep themselves and their loved ones safe. And so, they're always trying to mitigate disaster, always trying to anticipate what could go wrong, so that they can avert it.

But they don't trust themselves that they will anticipate everything that could go wrong. So, a lot of suffering for the 6 is that they too will sort of outsource their sense of agency. And they'll look to other people to give them advice, or they'll look to some sort of trusted institution. Again, it's a lack of trust in self. So, they never seem to trust these external things. They're trying to trust, because they don't think that they can discern it properly. I mean, the world is uncertain, that's all that we can be assured of.

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Devon: I feel like a 6 would be a great parent to have in your playgroup or in your mom's group because they're just always prepared. I am the scatterbrained 7 and I forgot a diaper. Can I borrow one? Do you have sunscreen? Not me. Going up to strangers at the beach, when I forget my sunscreen, and asking if I can just have little spritzes. I think that's great. But it can also be stressful, right?

Because another thing about kids, there's so many ways they can get hurt, get into trouble, break things. Just so much danger and potential issues everywhere. And I think the 6 really sees all of those possibilities as equally likely.

Liz: And the likelihood being 100%. Exactly. It's not just possible, it's imminent. And they're like, "What am I missing? What have I not imagined?" Because that's the thing that sort of keeps them running on the hamster wheel.

What's funny about 6s, to your point, they are the ones who, in a crisis or in a dangerous moment, get us through it really, really well. Then, as soon as the moment is over, they forget that they were actually the superheroes. "Oh, them, they kept us safe." And so, coming to take a risk as a 6, again, they get stuck in this sort of mental preparation loop, which will often prevent them from taking the next step forward, from taking an action making decision.

And so, the growth path for a 6 is "I might still be terrified. I might not trust that I've thought of everything that could go wrong. But I'm going to trust that I'm going to take this next step. I'm going to take action. And even if I didn't anticipate everything that could go wrong, I will be able to navigate it when I get there." It's this sort of courage

Devon: Yeah, and trusting that you have the resources within you, as well as in your diaper bag, to handle situations. And the people that you have around you. The sort of real world example I'm thinking of is how many products are out there now to monitor, keep track, protect? You can monitor your baby's pulse/ox while they're sleeping. Yeah, oh my God, there's so many things that are like, 'just tell me if my kid is dying.'

Which I think can be helpful, but can also go way overboard and become paranoia machines. I remember years ago seeing a baby monitor on the shelf at a store that said 'hear every peep', and I was like, "Who wants that? No, no,

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thank you. Leave some peeps alone. Put those peeps back. Let them peep, it's fine."

But I could see a 6 parent being like, "I could hear every peep? That sounds amazing. I want to hear every peep."

Liz: Right, and then "I'm going to analyze every peep, and I'm going to know what are distressed peeps versus what are content peeps."

Devon: And now there's all these apps and there's the video that records the baby and analyzes it in the app. It'll drive you up the wall. I mean again, a lot of them are great if used with the proper mindset. But I think they do take away so much self-trust and trust in your baby. And then people get...

This might be more of a 5 thing, but what do you think about logging every single thing your baby and kid does? Which is super important in the beginning when they're newborns. You want to monitor their feeding. You want to make sure they're peeing and pooping. When they get a little older you might be monitoring their sleep, because you're doing sleep training or getting them on a schedule.

But I feel like we've always done it with pen and paper, and then when these apps started coming out... I'll meet someone with a 9-month-old and she's still logging every diaper in the app. You don't really need to keep doing that.

Liz: Right. Again, that's all about grasping for certainty, security, assurance, outside of ourselves. We're all trying to feel like we have more control over things than we actually do. And so, to log things is very 5-ish, but also very 6-ish. It's also like I'm trying to establish some predictability in a world that doesn't feel predictable.

Last but not least, certainly not least, whenever I teach a workshop I'm always like, "Last and least we have our 7."

Devon: She's the meanest. Rude Ass Enneagram is not a joke. She's very rude.

Liz: I've earned it.

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Devon: She wanted to title the book Rude Ass Enneagram, but they wouldn't let her put "Ass" in the title, which is funny, because it's on the cover.

Liz: It's on the cover, but I got shut down. Yeah.

Devon: Yeah, but I like *The Unfiltered Enneagram*, because that's what it is.

Liz: It sets up my next book, which will be *The Unhinged Enneagram*.

Devon: No, that's amazing. Now you have to do that.

Liz: So, speaking of unhinged, the 7. So, type 7s are often referred to as The Epicure or The Adventurer. Sometimes they're known as The Maverick. But 7s have this beautiful, beautiful gift of being able to see the possibility and promise in everything. Potential is around every corner and in every person.

But the suffering, like we were talking about earlier, it's the awareness that so much potential is wasted. And so much mediocrity is accepted in place of what is possible. So much fails to measure up to what could be, and there's this fear within the 7.

It's sort of a two-layered fear, right? The top layer is, "The world is trying to hold me back from experiencing the top of potential, from experiencing the top of my potential, other people's potential, possibility, and the fullness that exists in the world."

But the lower level of that is, "There's something within me that holds me back from experiencing or expressing my full potential, and bringing about what I see as possible." Yeah, there's a lot of trying to avoid that disappointment and that let down. They are doing everything they can to avoid being trapped or deprived. They have a bit of a rebelliousness; they're softly rebellious.

They're charming about it, but they're kind of trying to buck any restraints that are placed upon them, in a fun and flirty way.

Devon: Parenting can feel like a trap, especially those long nights when the kid isn't sleeping, or you can't leave the house because you just gave birth, and you're laid up in bed because your body is physically recovering from the most

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dramatic thing that's probably ever going to happen. That you kind of hope is the most dramatic thing that's ever going to happen to your body.

Even just as you were saying it, I think of myself. I mean, I don't have my own children and a big part of the reason is because it is so restrictive. I have the best of both worlds. I see babies at work, I cuddle them, I laugh with them, we have a great time, and then I go home where I can do whatever I want. And the thought of a life where I was so dependent on another person's constant needs and schedule and everything else...

I joke all the time that I would absolutely have a full-time nanny, because I have spooned enough applesauce into enough mouths that I am done. I'll do it here and there to be cute, but I am not sitting in front of a high chair three times a day spooning applesauce into somebody's mouth. I have done that enough. I'm done. The novelty of the applesauce has worn off.

Liz: Yeah, as a parent, again as we were talking about with the 2s, there's baked into it this necessity of selflessness that you have to be willing to drop everything for these helpless, little squish mellows, that are depending on you for their survival. Even simple things like you can't shower some days.

Devon: Shower? Try peeing. I mean, that could become a trap.

Liz: Yeah, that can feel incredibly claustrophobic and suffocating for a 7. And then of course also with, similar to how we talked about with the 3s, it's confronting. You maybe have this fantasy of what you think you could be as a parent, and so there's that secondary fear of, "Oh there's something within me that can't bring about this potential parent that I thought I could be."

Devon: Oh, yeah, I think that is a rude awakening for a lot of people of any type. Just like, "This was my image of how it was going to go, and it's so different, and a lot of it is just so mundane." I remember a client asking me with her twin newborns, "When can I take them to a museum?" I was like, "They probably won't get anything out of it until they're at least four or five."

I think you envision yourself at these different stages, maybe with a six-month-old, a cute, little, bubbly, happy baby. Or a four-year-old who's talking

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and having conversations with you, and is so interesting and cool. And you don't envision this little blob, this alien, this fancy potato that is just needy and gives absolutely nothing back. Yep, it's not great. They do eventually.

Liz: Eventually. Something I've heard said many times about parenting is, the days are long and the years are fast. And really, the days are long. The days are really long.

Devon: For all the types, but especially for a 7. And so, you just have this vision of all these things you want to do, and they just become so difficult and everything takes 87 times as long. That is a scientific fact. That is the official government-approved scientific fact, right?

And I did, for a long time. I had babysat obviously. I've been around families and stuff like that, but in the day-to-day of those early days of a baby you don't really see that, especially in our society and culture. We're not family units and villages and stuff like that. Alex, until our friend had a baby, had never seen a newborn, never mind held one.

So, I think it's kind of a rude awakening what that is actually like. It was actually really funny, because the next day he said to me, the baby was about three weeks old when we met him, he goes, "I can't get over how useless his limbs were. They were just flopping around. I mean, a newborn baby is essentially a raw chicken with a head on it. It's just bony elbows and..." These things that we don't envision are now suddenly really cramping our style.

Liz: Yeah, that can be challenging for 7s. There is this tendency to distract themselves and to chase the next high, and to try to even reframe. Like, "Oh, this isn't disappointing, it's fine. Do what you've got to do to get through the day. This doesn't suck at all, I wanted spit up on my shirt."

I think the challenge is that I like to pitch to 7s to try to find ways to become satisfied with what is in the moment, right now. That this moment, even if it's frustrating, it's enough. I don't actually have to go chasing something else. I'm not actually trapped. This moment will pass, this feeling will pass, and right now is as it should be. I don't need to do anything to push it toward something potentially better.

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Devon: Yeah, I like that. It's important for a lot of types. It's important to just look at the moment and be present. Which is harder than it sounds, especially when you're spooning applesauce in for the 50 millionth time. But it's important because there are going to be great moments. There are going to be really wonderful ones, and you want to be able to enjoy those and embrace those, and not be thinking, "Why can't it be like this all the time?"

Sometimes it's so simple. I always tell the story of twins I cared for years ago; I'm still very close to the family, still in touch with them. Their birthday just passed, I forgot to send them a birthday text. They're 11.

Anyway, I was caring for them overnight, five nights a week. That was my job. That's what I do. And there was one night where one of the babies was super fussy, super difficult. I joked with the mom later that I was ready to throw her out the window. I was ready to tell her, "I'm not coming back. See you never."

In the morning, I had her in a carrier when I was washing the bottles and stuff, and she just let out this little sigh. Just like that, all was forgiven. Totally worth it. All my frustration went right out the window where I wanted to throw her. It just was totally worth it, and I was like, "I love you." They really do that to you. They can change in an instant, and turn so quickly.

So, even when you're super frustrated and everything is making you insane, it really can turn around really quickly.

Liz: It can, and it will pass. I think that's the biggest message to the 7, it will pass. Again, if we come back to this question of trust, which is the suffering for the head types, for 7 it's the trust of 'Can I withstand the disappointments, the trap, the suffocation, the deprivation?' And you can. So much of our misery in life is because we're trying to resist something, rather than just feeling it.

And so, just being present to the frustration and trusting it will pass, and "I have enough within me to survive this frustrating, disappointing, suffocating moment. And then there will be this sweet, wonderful, delightful moment that could not be surpassed. But I have to learn how to be present to all of it."

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Devon: It's true. And from a practical standpoint, you can figure out ways to fill your cup, to get what you need for your type. So, yeah. Do you have any parting words in general, for people that are newly experiencing enneagram, or people who know about it, or new parents who might be curious about it?

Liz: I think the thing that I can't overstate is that all of the ways that we have learned how to be in the world came about for a good reason. And even when they're frustrating to us and we feel like we are getting in our own way, I think it's so important to pause and say, "Okay, and this has served me. I'm fighting this thing now, but it has served me. It has gotten me what I need."

And that can just inject the littlest bit of self-compassion. That can help us breathe and become present to what is going on, and figure out what are the choices I have now? Do I have to rely on this old pattern or do I have other options available to me?

Can I, as an 8, find a way to be a little softer and more vulnerable in this moment? As a 9, can I figure out a way to become more engaged in this moment rather than disengaged and numb? As a 1, can I forgive myself? Can I let myself off the hook in this moment?

As a 2, can I ask for what I need? Can I get some help rather than trying to be everyone's provider? As a 3, can I fail? Can I let myself fail in this moment and let someone see who I really am? As a 4, can I just accept the boring mundaneness of this task without needing to perform? How special I am within it? Can I give myself a break from proving how special I am?

For the 5, can I be overwhelmed and let someone else in on my overwhelm, rather than isolating or pushing people away? As a 6, can I just make a decision, take a risk, and figure it out when I get there? As a 7, can I be present to my disappointments and just let it pass, rather than trying to distract myself from it?

Devon: Yeah, that's a big one. And since 7s are classic reframers... When you said that was our flaw or whatever it was, and I said 'but isn't that a good thing?' and you said, 'way to reframe that.'

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Something that I was thinking while you were saying that was there's also a positive side to all these traits. The things that got you, like you said, they got you here for a reason. Yes, maybe I can't necessarily stick to something all the time and see it all the way through, but guess what? If the plan changes, if things change, I am right there with the changes. I don't need to stay stuck on the path and get stressed out about it.

Depending what your type is, there's a lot of really positives to it too. And a lot of times they're just the reverse side of the same coin. So, thank you so much Liz for joining us. This has been so great. Tell us one more time where to find you.

Liz: You can find me on Instagram - Rudeassenneagram. And to Devon's point, the beautiful side of each enneagram type you can find on pretty much any other enneagram Instagram account. Occasionally I'll reference it, but it's mostly the shadow side. And then, I have a book that's out there in the universe now. Buy it at any bookseller that you can find, whether it's big bad Amazon or small local bookstores.

Devon: Yeah, we love bookshop.org. We recommend it. We sent out some gift cards to some of our winners in the early days of the podcast, which was cool. Yeah, I think it's great because you can just get books from independent bookstores. It's as easy as a large retailer. Of course, if you have a local bookstore go there and check it out.

But her book, I will say, is not nearly as rude as Instagram. It has a lot of really lovely positive messages. And I think it's just so important to really get to know yourself. It makes you a better person and a better parent. Thank you so much Liz for joining us. I hope we get to do this again.

Liz: I'm sure we will. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for having me.

Alright, listen up folks. We love to joke around but it's time to get real. And that real talk is all about giving your babies the roasting they deserve. Yep. You heard it right. We're calling for an epic Baby Roast.

We want you to drop a voice note on our website, and call out your little ones for their adorable crimes. Did your baby spit up on your brand-new dress the

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second you put it on? Or maybe they decided to scream through your sister's wedding vows? We want to hear all the juicy details.

Head over to HappyFamilyAfter.com, or hit the link in the show notes. Every page on the site has a button on the side for you to record straight from your phone. Your story might just make it onto an episode of the *Parenthood Prep* podcast. We can't wait to hear.

Thanks for listening to this week's episode of *Parenthood Prep*. If you want to learn more about the services Devon offers, as well as access her free monthly newborn care webinars, head on over to www.HappyFamilyAfter.com.