



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Devon Clement

Ep #27: How a Process-Oriented Mindset Makes Parenting (And Being a Child) More Fun

Do you feel like doing activities with your baby, toddler, or preschooler just feel like an annoying slog, or do you both end up getting frustrated and cranky? I'm going to share some tips with you on how to make those experiences more enjoyable for everyone involved. Stay tuned.

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 the *Parenthood Prep* podcast. I am currently fostering 11 total cats and kittens in addition to my 2. It is actually not as chaotic as it sounds, but if you hear any background noise, that is them.

One thing I love about fostering is just watching everyone grow and develop and build these relationships with each other that don't necessarily happen at first, but then you reach a point where it's like, wow, everybody's friends. There are seven cats on my bed. Everybody's doing fine. There's no room for me, but it's cool. It's cool.

I want to talk about something today. I love to give you practical tips and strategies and explain things on this podcast. Which is great, but I also love helping people and helping parents think about things differently. Going into a situation or just your day-to-day life with a different mindset, a different mentality. Because that matters so much in how it comes out practically, how it manifests where you are in your mind.

Things like thinking about your child as a video game character. That's not necessarily something you're doing practically; you're not sticking a red sticker on their forehead, although I guess you could. It might be helpful to the people around them, teachers at school; kids coming in with green, yellow, or red stickers, could be very useful actually. But it is helping you to think about situations a little bit differently.

Ep #27: How a Process-Oriented Mindset Makes Parenting (And Being a Child) More Fun

Something I want to talk about today is when you're doing something with your child, or even without your child, are you focused on the product, the outcome, or are you focused on the process?

Obviously, there's a time and a place for each. Something I know from doing crafts, knitting, sewing, embroidery, and that kind of thing, is that there's the process. The actual act of making the thing; what's going on, you're doing it, you're knitting socks while you're watching TV or whatever.

And then there's the product, there's the outcome. Some projects are a really difficult process, but it's worth it for the product, the beautiful outcome. Some are just a really fun journey of the process, and the outcome is great but it's not the main focus that you're going for.

You're going to see this with your kids too, especially in those early childhood years where your kids really are not super independent. You're doing things with them a lot. You're spending a lot of time with them during the day, when they're a baby or a toddler or a preschooler, and you feel like you're spending a lot of time filling the time. What are we going to do?

But at the same time, you have stuff to do. You don't necessarily have the ability to just play with toys with your kids all day. Not that you should want to or should be obligated to do that. But you're going to do some different activities, and you want to make those activities enjoyable but also useful.

A bunch of years ago, I was staying with a friend. She'd had a pretty bad injury and she had a two-year-old and a baby, and she was not able to be as physically mobile and take care of her kids. I stayed with them for a while, and I helped out with the kids. Which was great, I loved it. I loved being part of their family and just going through the day to day with them.

One of the things is that I would give the two-year-old a really long bath every night. The mom would say to me, "I barely have the patience to bathe him every couple of days. I don't know how you manage to give him these really long baths every night and not want to die."

Ep #27: How a Process-Oriented Mindset Makes Parenting (And Being a Child) More Fun

I'm like, "Because, honestly, he loves the bath. He's so independent in the bath that he will play for an hour, just chilling." Honestly, leaving me alone. I have to be in the room with him for safety because I don't want him to drown or climb out of the tub and hurt himself, but I can be doing whatever I want. I can be reading a magazine. I can be reading a book. I can bring my laptop in there. I didn't have a smartphone at the time.

You can bring your smartphone in. You can be cleaning the bathroom. You can be organizing the bathroom. You could be knitting. You could be embroidering. You could be doing whatever. As long as you're sitting there making sure this kid is not drowning or not hurting himself, you can do anything. I loved having that time in the evening.

With every kid I've ever babysat for or nannied, I make the bath time such a huge part of the day because they love it. And I love having the opportunity to just be kind of chilling out. If we're in a rush, if we're product-oriented, if the product we're focused on is a bathed, clean child, then you're going to be sitting there stressed out.

"Okay, no. Okay, we're done playing with toys. Okay, time to wash your hair. Okay, no, wow we have to do this." It's not going to be fun for anybody because then the kid's going to get cranky, you're going to be cranky, everybody's going to be cranky, and you're just going to have a terrible time.

If you're instead oriented on the process of 'he's going to go play in the tub for an hour while I do something that's enjoyable for me, useful for me, or something that I need to do, then we're both going to have an enjoyable time.' We're both going to have a really good time, and we're going to go into the evening, into the bedtime process, feeling a lot calmer and more relaxed because we both have had something that we want.

One day I baked with him. Any kid that I've baked with, is it about having beautiful cookies or beautiful cupcakes or some kind of beautiful muffin at the end of the process? Of course not. You're baking with a three-year-old. It's not going to come out great, but it's going to fill up some time. It's going to teach them some stuff. They're going to be learning, measuring, mixing, getting some fine motor skills, following directions. There's so much that goes into it.

Ep #27: How a Process-Oriented Mindset Makes Parenting (And Being a Child) More Fun

In addition, you're just having fun. You're just having a good time doing this process. And then, yeah, maybe the muffins or the cookies or whatever come out looking crappy, but who cares?

I've seen parents do this activity with their kids and they're so focused on, "Okay, no, not like that. No, we're not going to do it like that. No, give mommy the spoon. I'm going to do it right. Let me do it the right way." That totally defeats the purpose. You're just doing an enjoyable activity with your kid for the process. And you know what? If it takes kind of a long time, that's kind of great.

A lot of times, when you're home with a three-year-old, you are just filling time. As one of my dear friends, and one of our best doulas on the team said, "With a toddler, you're just getting from one sleep to the next." You really are. It's like, "Morning. We're going to do some stuff until it's nap time." Then, yeah, "It's nap time." Then we're going to do some stuff until it's bedtime. Then, yeah, "It's bedtime."

So when you are doing an activity like that, you want to be focused on the process rather than the product. And you know what? If they make a mess, guess what? Cleanup is part of that process too, and they're going to clean up with you. It does mean you have to manage time a little bit. If you have to start dinner in 30 minutes, now is not the time to start a baking project. It's going to take longer than that to do the baking project and do the cleanup. You're going to want to do it when you have some real time to fill.

And you can include them in that process so that you're not sitting there going, "Oh my God, baking with my kid is so messy. Why do I have to do it?" You're going to say, "Okay, part of what we're learning is now we have to clean up. Now we have to put the dishes in the dishwasher. Now we have to wipe down the table. Now we have to wash the dishes." Kids love washing dishes. They love it so much.

Another thing, besides the bath that I've done with kids to kill time, fill time, let them stand in front of the bathroom sink, on a step stool, with a bowl of water and just play with it. Or turn the faucet on. You don't want to waste a ton of water, but turn the faucet on and let them play with some toys in the sink. And

Ep #27: How a Process-Oriented Mindset Makes Parenting (And Being a Child) More Fun

yeah, they're going to get all wet, but then we're going to change our clothes. That's all going to be part of this process.

And while they're doing these things, you can, again, either be doing something you enjoy, something you want to be doing, or something you have to do. Especially with little babies. I know I say this all the time, your five-month-old baby does not need you to sit on the floor next to them while they're on their play mat the entire time. You can be doing whatever while they're doing that.

If they get a little fussy, especially if they're used to you sitting there next to them on the play mat, it is okay. They can get a little frustrated. They can get a little fussy. Because this is when they learn their new skills. This is when they start doing new physical things; reaching for toys, rolling over.

When they're even littler, they're getting their hands up to their face and just experiencing all these different sensations because you're not sitting there staring at them and not letting them do their thing. Speaking of learning new skills, rolling, something that I love to work on with sleep training babies, especially when they're in the four- to six-month range, if they're not consistently rolling over yet, and a lot of them aren't... I mean, it's developmentally appropriate somewhere in the four- to five-month range.

But a lot of times, if you've been struggling with a baby, they're not sleeping and they're fussy and they're not getting that floor play time because it makes them too upset, they're not going to learn those skills. I have worked with several six-month-olds, even seven-month-olds, that aren't rolling over yet. But whatever age your baby is...

Also, a funny side note. A few years ago, I was nannying for a baby and she was so chubby. She was such a chunk. I loved it. I started taking care of her as a newborn. She was kind of the start of my newborn care specialist, postpartum doula career.

Anyway, she was like five months old and she really wasn't rolling over yet. I started googling it because I was a little worried. And one of the things that kept coming up was, 'if they're a fat baby, they're going to have a harder time rolling over and it'll probably come later.' And I was like, "Okay, this makes sense."

Ep #27: How a Process-Oriented Mindset Makes Parenting (And Being a Child) More Fun

And now she's like 16, and she's perfect. So don't worry about that if your baby is not quite rolling over yet. But have they had the practice? Have they had the experience? Have they had time to do that? It's so helpful for sleep if they can get themselves comfortable in the crib.

Of course we're putting them down on their backs, but once they're independently rolling either to their side, their tummy, or even staying on their backs, being able to feel like they have that movement autonomy and they can get themselves comfortable, it just makes such a huge difference in their sleep because they're able to get comfortable. They're not doing that startle reflex. They're not stuck in an uncomfortable position, whatever.

So I do this thing that I call "rolling bootcamp", where we spend some real serious time on the floor with them, on the play mat, and really practicing. I'll post a video of this or something. But, basically, sometimes I'll help them just a little bit. I'll have them hold my finger so that they can pull themselves up from a middle position rather than fully flat on their back position.

And it takes a lot of patience to just sit there, with them holding your finger, waiting for them to do that next step of pulling themselves over. I'll be showing it to the parents and 9 times out of 10, they'll pull the baby all the way over and they'll go like, "Look at that. You did it. You rolled over." But they didn't, you rolled them over.

So we have to trust the process and not just be focused on the product. If the product was that we wanted the baby to be on their tummy, we would just flip them over. Great. Now it's tummy time. But we want them to learn the skill of getting themselves there. In that case, we do want to sit next to them on the play mat.

But for the most part, when they're doing that, they can be alone. We can leave them to do that process while we take care of things that we want to be taking care of.

So sometimes you have to be product oriented. You're making a cake for somebody's birthday. You're making dinner. We do have to get the bath over with quickly because we're getting ready to go somewhere or it's getting late.

Ep #27: How a Process-Oriented Mindset Makes Parenting (And Being a Child) More Fun

We came back from somewhere and now we have to go to bed straight away. That's fine.

Sometimes you're allowed to be product oriented and it's not a problem. But think about it as you're going into it. Am I doing this activity for the product, or am I doing it for the process? And if you're doing it for the process, just let go. Focus on that. Don't worry about the outcome. Don't worry about the product. And your life is going to get so much easier, calmer, and more fun.

Talk to you soon.

Alright, listen up, folks. We love to joke around but it's time to get real. And that real talk, it's 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 second you put it on? 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.

If you enjoyed today's show and don't want to worry about missing an episode, you can follow the show wherever you listen to your podcasts. If you haven't already, I would really appreciate it if you could share the podcast with others who you think would benefit. Leave a rating and review to let me know what you think. It doesn't have to be a five-star rating, although I sure hope you love the show. I want your honest feedback, so I can create an awesome podcast that provides tons of value.

Visit HappyFamilyAfter.com/podcastlaunch for step-by-step instructions on how to follow, rate, and review.

Ep #27: How a Process-Oriented Mindset Makes Parenting (And Being a Child) More Fun

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.