

Ep #28: Break Free From Over-Responsiveness: How to Not Become Your Kid's Servant With Margaret Mason Tate



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Devon Clement

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Do you sometimes feel like you are your child's servant? Do you see other parents acting like that and you don't want to create that dynamic with your current or future kid? Stay tuned, because we're going to tell you all about how to make your parenting relationship much more equitable and have a wonderful time with your very independent child.

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 so excited today. I'm so excited every week, but I just love doing this. What can I say?

We have one of our favorite guests back, Margaret Mason Tate. She is a coach, a consultant, a teacher, and one of my favorite people. We have just had so many great conversations over the years as parenting guides, which she used to be more of and now she's more like a coach.

Devon Clement: What would you call yourself? You tell me.

Margaret Mason Tate: I'm definitely more of a coach. I help, most often, women and people who are parents. But it's less of a focus there, and it's more high-achieving, burnt-out, former gifted kids.

Devon: Yeah, well totally. And all the time you've been raising your son, and you do have a background in working with parents because we actually met through running doula businesses. So you do have that training and that experience, but you've also seen it just play out with your kid and your friends and your clients.

And I think that's so much the crux of what I'm trying to do, both with my work and with this podcast, is finding that balance between the parents and the kids.

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Where everyone can be happy and learn and have the life that they want to have.

And it doesn't have to mean that if you get what you want, your kid doesn't. Or if your kid gets what they want, you don't. There's this world in the middle of the Venn diagram where everyone's better off.

Margaret: Listen, there is a millennial anthem for the ages by a band called Jimmy Eat World. There's a song and it is called "The Middle". "It just takes some time, live a little in the middle." And it all comes down to that balance.

Devon: I think that's such a good point. I was going to say "Welcome to the Black Parade," but that's even better. Or I don't know, "Man! I Feel Like a Woman." I could list these all day.

Margaret: Absolutely. We'll make a podcast. No, we're doing a podcast. We'll make a playlist.

Devon: Or we could do a podcast about millennial anthems. I think it would be great.

Margaret: Absolutely. Listen, I pushed an actual human baby out of my body to a TLC song. I mean, that's a real thing that happened.

Devon: Which one?

Margaret: Which baby?

Devon: No, which song?

Margaret: I only have one child.

Devon: But there are many TLC songs.

Margaret: Yes, yes. "Push it!" actually.

Devon: Oh, sure.

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Margaret: To be basic.

Devon: Yeah, no, that makes sense. I thought maybe, "No Scrubs," which would be kind of funny in a hospital.

Margaret: It really would.

Devon: Yeah, so you just have so many little nuggets of wisdom that I love so much, and I want to talk about them. But the one that really stuck out for me for a long time is when you said that your child expressing a feeling, a desire, just making a statement, is not the same thing as making a request.

And we so often, as parents, particularly as parents socialized as women, interpret that as the same thing as a request. "I'm thirsty." "Oh, here, let me get you some water." And that leads to this dynamic where we become our child's servant and not their parent. So why don't you speak to that a little bit?

Margaret: Yeah, so I helped raise my son's older half-brother. I was a parent before I was a parent. And one of the things that I learned really quickly, kind of jumping in head first into the parenting game with a five-year-old, was that the statement of desire on their part could not, and should not, equate to an action on my part.

Not only because they need to "Get your own damn water," not only for that, not only for that reason, but also because we, as parents and caregivers and people in community with young children, need to be able to allow them to express needs and then to be able to sit with and hold those wants, desires. To sit with and hold those. Okay, now what? What are you going to do about that?

Devon: Are you going to do anything about it?

Margaret: Because what about when it becomes not 'I want water' or 'I want juice' or 'I want to go to the park,' but what about when it's 'I want to go to college'? Because it comes so fast. My child is 10 and a half years old and it comes as fast as people say. There's just no way to overstate that. So laying the groundwork early on is pivotal.

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Devon: Absolutely. And how early would you say we should start laying the groundwork?

Margaret: When they are verbal. Literally. My child, honestly, it was so easy because I went into it knowing this. Because I was working with parents for many years before I became a parent myself.

Devon: Well, and you had your stepson. And I think this is relevant, because this is also my experience being a caregiver, stepping into a child's life when they're four, five, eight, ten, even two, one, and not having been the person that responded to every 'meh' from when they were born. And that habit breaking is hard, but it's important.

So you came onto the scene with, I don't know, how old was your stepson when you met him?

Margaret: Five.

Devon: So you came onto the scene with a five-year-old who said, "I want water. I'm thirsty," and was used to someone giving him water. And you were like, "Dude, you're five. You are old enough to either get it yourself or at least say, 'Hey, can you get me some water, please?'"

And when they're not doing that, you're like, wait a minute, what's going on here? And then you say, okay, I don't want to create this dynamic with my kid. So from the jump, honestly, and we'll get into this, I think even earlier than verbal, I think from the beginning we should be thinking about is this a need that I need to respond to, or is this a want? Or, this is a whole other topic we're going to talk about another time, is this a feeling?

"Are they having feelings? Are they having a feeling? Do I need to do anything about it?" Maybe you don't.

Margaret: Gee willikers. And also, is this feeling yours or theirs?

Devon: We might have to edit that out.

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Margaret: Oh, no, no, they're ready. They're ready for it.

Devon: They're ready. Okay. All right.

Margaret: Not suitable for work, but they're ready. And I agree. I think that if we really want to push it, and I think that we do, it kind of starts with obviously preverbal, but it starts with... I call it the absolute... I'm not even going to say what I call it, because it's a reference to 1984.

But the video monitors, that we can see and hear and everything, we know the temperature, and it's all of this vital information, and we see it on a dashboard, and we think that we have this level of control that we don't. And that's why we love them, and I understand. But it engenders this thing where we're responding quite literally to every grunt and noise.

And babies are so loud and obnoxious sleepers. They're just so bombastic and grunty, and they do all of these things.

Devon: Yeah, I think that's such a huge thing. And honestly, it's something that I learned early on from taking care of twins. Because the only thing that will keep you from responding to a baby is another baby.

Margaret: Is another baby. Absolutely.

Devon: The only thing that takes precedence, as your caregiver... and this is not how it should be, but it is how you feel... as your caregiver, you fuss or cry... I'm on the toilet bowl, I'm in the shower, I'm eating food... none of those things matter. I will jump up with my panties around my ankles to respond to you. Unless I am in the middle of responding to another baby. Or that other baby is in an unsafe situation, like on the changing table, and I cannot step away.

And then they figure it out. Or it's just a 'meh', and then they're over it. Maybe it was gas. I just shared something to our Instagram stories. It was two pictures of a small baby, one in which she was just absolutely screaming, and one in which she was smiling a huge smile and said, "My friend's baby was screaming, and then she farted." Sometimes they just need to fart.

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Margaret: And can we be honest with ourselves and each other, safe space? I feel we've been basically best friends for almost 10 years, by the way. We need to start planning our 10-year anniversary trip.

Devon: And everyone who's listening is our best friend, too.

Margaret: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, safe space. You're in the safe space, too, listener, friend. I feel the same way sometimes. I also want to be crying and making a lot of noise, and then I can fart, and then I'm happy and smiling again. It happens. Okay? Are you eating fiber? It's going to happen.

Devon: And you don't need someone to do anything about that for you. So getting back to the focus of the topic, an expression of any kind is not necessarily a request. And yes, when they're teeny tiny, and they're crying, and it's time to feed, we're going to feed them. We're not going to expect them to say, "Hey, can I have a bottle? Hey, can I have a boob?" Obviously not.

But once they become verbal, tell us about that.

Margaret: So once they become verbal, it does take longer with kids that have had some caregiver "effery." Because with my stepson, for instance, had already had all that input. My kid, though, had already been introduced to boundaries, like other types of boundaries, and so was very used to it.

But the thing that happened, when he would make these not requests, right? "I'm hungry. I'm bored." He would make these things, and I would say, "Is that a request or are you just making a statement?" And he would have to think about it. Because sometimes he really did want me to get the goldfish.

But most of the time, really, truly more often than not, not even like 60/40, but more like 85% of the time, he was really empowered by being able to get stuff for himself.

Now, that did mean that we did have to set up our kitchen, for instance, he had to have access to cups that he was allowed to use. He had to have access to

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things if we wanted to be able to engender that independence. We also had to have the infrastructure for it.

If kids get in trouble or shooed away or whatever, from everything in the kitchen, they're not going to feel comfortable using that space. They don't feel like it's theirs at all.

Devon: Sure, sure. I think that's super important. That really is part of a bigger topic, as well, how to make it possible for your kids to do these things for themselves. Honestly, what I'm thinking of, as you're saying this, is just lazy parenting, which is a good thing. Be lazier.

I was such a lazy teacher, lazy nanny. I have a whole topic about this. And my students were so independent. They would get so many compliments from other teachers, other classrooms. Like, "Wow, they put their backpacks on by themselves?" I'm like, yeah, because I'm not going to stand there and put 12 backpacks on. That's not how I want to be spending my time.

So you're going to learn how to put your own backpack on, which is an important skill. And it's not something that I need to do for you. And it's because I'm not going to stand there and do that.

Margaret: And you really shouldn't. And I think that so often, we're kind of told that in order to be good, or even great... and I know that you and I love greatness... and if we want to be good or even great caregivers, we need to be overly, ultra responsive. We need to be anticipating every need. We need to be putting on every backpack and loving it. And loving it.

And then if you don't love it, you're like, "What is wrong with me?" I love my career. I love my job. But I don't really love being a handmaiden to several domineering bosses under two.

Devon: Yes. Yes. I don't love being a servant to these children. And, not for nothing, my partner too. How many times have you heard women say, "Oh, my husband is my second child. I feel like I have three children."

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Margaret: Well, can I say this? Listen, I'm a longtime resident... not anymore... but I was born and raised in South Carolina. And I have to say this, I'm sorry, to get very real. But children of parents who are in this constant response, they actually do have difficulties later on. Their emotional regulation skills are a lot, lot, lot shallower.

And it actually externalizes a lot of behavior like aggression. And that stuff, I mean, let's just be honest, it leads to domestic violence. And that starts high school, college.

Devon: Yeah. And I think even, taking it a step back from that and going simpler, they don't know how to handle anything for themselves when you're doing everything for them. And it's not just like, "I said I was thirsty in the cafeteria and no one brought me a drink. What am I supposed to do?"

Then it goes into their relationships with future partners. Then it goes into creating that dynamic where then they're going to be a child for their future partner's spouse. They're going to be, "Okay, now I'm away at college and I need to figure out how to change my class schedule. My parents set that up for me so I don't know how to do that."

Honestly, the number of friends I have that work in higher education, literally college-university level, who are getting emails from parents about stuff that's going on with their kid... I'm like, "I don't even know that my mom knew where I went." Like, "Oh, Rutgers, that sounds familiar."

Margaret: And for context, my mom was an alumna of my college and literally knew a vast majority of my professors by first name and still didn't contact them. That's weird.

Devon: It's weird. And when you get into this habit, from your kid being small, they don't learn how to handle their own stuff and you don't learn how to let them handle their own stuff.

Margaret: It's a bummer when you don't realize that your kid is a separate entity from you and then they move out.

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Devon: Yeah. And then you don't know what to do with yourself.

Margaret: You have no idea. And that's actually becoming really prevalent. I don't have parents anymore; I'm famously an orphan. But you have parents this age, and people in their peer group are just not knowing what to do with themselves to death. They just don't know what to do after they retire and wander around in a kind of atrophy.

Devon: Yeah. Or then you become the servant to your grandchildren.

Margaret: Oh yeah. For sure. Yes. Bunny was very different with my child than she was with me.

Devon: Which I think is cute. I think that's sweet. I think that's nice. Unless you have a fairly primary caregiving role, if you're taking care of your grandkids every day while your kids are at work or whatever, or just the kind of grandparent that comes over all the time, you need to have a little bit more of those boundaries.

But when you're the grandparent that sees your grandkids once a month or every couple of weeks or whatever, you're allowed to be a little ridiculous.

Margaret: I have a picture of her giving my 15-month-old coffee from a Yeti tumbler and he's just like, "Ah yay!" Oh yeah. Oh yeah. She did not care.

Devon: So how do we change it? What do we do differently? What if we're already in a situation where this is the case, and we need to shift out? Or what if we're not in that situation yet? We're expecting to have a tiny baby, how can we not end up in this dynamic of 'we do everything for our kids' and they are completely codependent?

Margaret: So okay. Remind me to come back to the new baby, starting from scratch, tabula rasa. But when you have an older child, let's say you've got three, five, six-year-old child. Also, can I just say, if you're listening to this and that's how old your kid is, we're so happy that you're listening to this.

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So I just want you to know, A: The first thing that you have to walk back is any kind of regret, shame, any kind of guilt, whatever, remorse. Leave it at the door. It's not going to help. It's not going to do anything. Doing something now is going to change your whole life. Look towards the future and be happy about that. Please, please, please. That's just number one.

Number two is: I like to recommend having a conversation and taking ownership of not doing this sooner. So I like to say, have a little very brief combo that's like, "Oh my gosh, I have been doing something silly. Don't need to do it. I'm going to change this thing that I'm going to do."

So if you want something and you say, 'I want' whatever, I'm going to say, "Is that a question?" So that we both can be communicating in a better way, in a way that works more long-term.

Then number three is the worst thing, and I hate to even say this out loud. I'm so sorry. But then, you have to do it, but consistently. I know. And you have to do it in every setting. So yes, even when you go to dinner. Yes, even when you have a friend over. Yes. It has to be in different situations.

The great news about that is the more variance you have in the situations that you exercise it in, the quicker it takes hold and the more longevity and the better the foundation is of the whole thing. So that's the good news. But the bad news is you do have to do it.

Devon: It's learning a skill and you're both learning that skill. I've talked about this a few times. I was talking about how to get your kids to do chores and help clean up and participate more, and you have to set that tone where you're letting them do it. And you both have to learn how to work together. Or in your case, work less so that they can work more.

Margaret: Do less. My entire coaching practice is essentially having people do a lot less. Obligate yourself less, sign up less.

Devon: And going back to, I think, such a simple thing is, is this a request or is this just a statement? You can even do that with adults. You taught me that.

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People express a problem, tell you a story, express an issue, and we want to jump to fix it for them. We want to give advice. We want to solve the problem. I know this is a big thing I have. I want to fix it for you. "Do you want advice or do you just want me to listen? Do you want me to do something about this, or no?"

Margaret: Yeah. Solutions are support. Do we want solutions? Do we want support? Learning how to be supportive without solutions is honestly very challenging to a lot of us. The more high achieving you are, the more "type A" you are, the higher your IQ, it is almost impossible. Because we look at everything as little puzzles. And you are a puzzle fiend.

Devon: I do. I do love a puzzle so much.

Margaret: You love them.

Devon: I love them. That's why I love sleep training. It is like solving a puzzle. Where do the pieces need to fit to get this kid straightened out? What needs to happen? That's why I love it. But it was difficult for me for a long time to support the parents through that process, while they wanted to just jump in and respond and fix the kid.

Because, honestly, if your kid's upset about something, that doesn't mean you need to fix it. Sometimes they're going to be upset about things. If you're going to Target, and they don't want to go to Target, and they're upset about that, generally you're going to be like, "Sorry kiddo, we need to go to Target, and you're going to have to feel your feelings." And it's fine.

But when it's not that, when it's, "You've got to learn how to fall asleep on your own. Sorry, kiddo. You're going to learn. You're going to do great. It's going to be fine." But, "No, no, no, no. They're upset. I can't. I can't. They can't. We can't do it. Forget it."

You don't say, "No, fine. We won't go to Target." I mean, I'm sure some people do.

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Margaret: I'm sure that you do, but then you have really lasting problems, in all areas of your life. We can't be that pliable. We have to be able to build relationships with these human beings, these people, that are able to withstand them being upset at us or near us in different spaces.

I love allowing kids to feel their feelings, but I need you to feel them in the car. We've got to go. You know what I mean? I don't want to cut the emoting off at the knees, but it needs to be portable. And they need to not expect every single thing to stop so that they can emote, because then they won't be able to experience emotions in any other...

Devon: "Oh, you're upset that we're going to Target. Well, what if I buy you an ice cream?" "Okay, fine. I'll go to Target." But then they want that transactional exchange.

Margaret: Yeah. As somebody who's working through my food issues as related to my father, Tommy T.... There's a lot there... having food not be a bribe is helpful.

Devon: Which is not to say you can never do it. I remember a moment when I was with these sweet, sweet twins I used to take care of for a long time. They were maybe two and a half, three, and we were at the park and I was like, "Okay, girls, we've got to go." I started to see the one eyebrow twitch, and I was like, "But we're going to stop for ice cream." And they were both like, "Yay."

And I thought to myself after, I feel like that was not the best move. But I just did not have the capacity at that moment for the breakdown. And now I'm fighting you into the stroller. And now you don't want to leave. And now blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. But I caught it before it started, so it wasn't like I responded to the breakdown. But I still think about it.

Margaret: Well, I think you should limit it, because it's got to be impactful when you really need it, when you *really* need something to come through. If you're getting a cake pop at every Starbucks drive-through, it's not going to work. I

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needed those to be the big guns. Shit is hitting the fan and I have to go right now, and I need you to be able to be cool with that.

Devon: And if you're constantly using those tools at your disposal... This goes back to what I say about treating your kid like a video game character, like the red-yellow-green zone.... If they're in the Starbucks drive-through and they're in the green zone, they do not need a cake pop. It's fine. But you have to take them to get a shot or something, "We'll get a cake pop after," ooh, that's exciting.

Margaret: We actually do ice cream with flu shots. That is an every time thing. And it's a really nice tradition. "We're going to get our flu shots..." and we don't like them. I mean, Hamish and I, it knocks us down. But we go get the ice cream and it's really nice.

Having those treat foods as an association is not bad, but you do need to use it intentionally.

Devon: And that doesn't mean that the trip to Target or whatever has to be torture for the kid just because you don't want them to associate rewards. You can find things that are enjoyable. "We can go look at the books. Oh, Target's right next to Petco. We can go in and look at the fish and the hamsters after."

But it becomes this relationship, this relational dynamic where you're doing things that you both either need or want. And it's not like, okay, fine. You don't want to go. You're having a fit. So why don't I buy you off with X, Y, Z?

And it's a subtle difference, but it's such a huge difference. Frankly, if you're not spending 20 minutes trying to coax them into agreeing to go to Target, you have time to go to Petco and look at the fish.

Margaret: Yeah. Side note, though. Can I just say, we used to be a real country. Because back in the day, you could go into a Kmart, you could get a fish, you could pick up an exercise bike or a camping tent...

Devon: Or some clothes.

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Margaret: Yeah, absolutely. Get a new sweatband, and a head out, get a Charleston Chew, and you're all good. That could have been our reality. You want to go look at the fish, but no.

Devon: They don't sell fish. But I do think it's funny, the number of friends who take their kids to Petco as if it's an aquarium or zoo. I think it's amazing. I think it's amazing. I think people need to do these lazier things.

I used to take the kid I took care of and we'd walk up to the train station and just watch the trains go by. Just the New Jersey transit. He was thrilled.

Margaret: You know what they are? New people, new smells, new things to look at and read.

Devon: Trains.

Margaret: Actual trains.

Devon: He loved trains. I've seen parents follow the garbage truck down the street.

Margaret: Yes, I have been doing the [inaudible] with a dear, dear relationship with the trash man.

Devon: And they love it. And it doesn't exhaust them; going to the zoo is exhausting. It's a long ass day. It's expensive. What's free? Going to Petco, following the garbage truck down the street, going up to the train station and watching the train. We didn't need to ride the train. He didn't care. He just wanted to see it pass by, come and go.

He ratted me out a little bit. This was back in the day when I would have to deposit checks and stuff. The bank was right by the train station, so we'd stop at the bank, get the little bank lollipop, and we'd go watch the trains. And then his mom would be walking with him and she's like, "He keeps wanting to go into this bank." I'm like, "That's my bank. He knows he gets a lollipop in there."

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Margaret: Oh man, the Saf-T suckers. I love those things. A lime Saf-T sucker, nothing beats it.

Devon: I like a Dum-Dum, personally. Do you know what the Dum-Dum's mystery flavor is? This is a little fun fact.

Margaret: Is it kind of a piña colada situation?

Devon: No, it's always different, and here's why. Because the mystery flavor, when they have one flavor going into the machine, and then they change it to a different flavor, and there's that period where it's mixed between the two, they were like, "Let's call that mystery flavor." And that's what that is.

Margaret: That is brilliant and thrilling.

Devon: Isn't that exciting? I love that.

Margaret: Thank you so much. I will be thinking about this all day; the dopamine hit that I just got from that.

Devon: They were like, "Should we get rid of all this mixed lollipop? No. What if we sell it?" I mean, this is where capitalism is maybe sometimes not the worst thing in the world.

Margaret: It's where the rubber meets the road. And I really do appreciate that they realize that there is a person, there's a market out there for this product, and that is me. Do you remember being at Claire's or The Icing, or God forbid, Afterthoughts? If you remember that one. They would have these things up by the register, they were paper bags, stapled; the tops were folded over and stapled. And they were a \$5 surprise pack.

Devon: Ooh, no, but I can imagine it, and it sounds great.

Margaret: Oh my God. It's basically like a little girl FitFabFun. You know?

Devon: Yes. Oh my God. I love a subscription box. I love a monthly surprise.

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Margaret: I want a little surprise. And oh, the Claire's surprise packs would really, really hit. Oh, I loved it. And it was just their random merch that was like one pack of earrings. But the surprise aspect...

Devon: Yeah. So save the surprise packet Claire's for when you really want to get your kid motivated to do something. Okay. So let's boil down what we talked about. Give us some bullet points.

Margaret: So bullet points are: That starting really, really early, with the expectation and the consistent relationship where you are not responding to every statement of desire with an action or a reaction on your part. Starting that as soon as you can.

Devon: Statement of desire or statement of displeasure.

Margaret: Amen. Amen. Amen. Because boy, have you ever met a more malcontent person than a toddler? Lord, Jesus.

Devon: No. Good Lord.

Margaret: Oh, my God. Boiling it down: Getting started really early. Being as consistent as humanly possible will get you the results the fastest. The more consistent you can be, the faster it will really, really catch on. That means that it catches on in your family culture. Which means that if you have more children, or you have other children who come over, that's going to be the culture.

I have told the story many times about how I told a large group of children that came to my home that I had cast a spell on the property and I was no longer physically able to hear "whiny voice." I couldn't hear it. If they use that voice, I wouldn't be able to hear them. And I committed to the bit so much that they did not use the whiny voice. So it was incredible.

Devon: Oh, God, that sounds glorious.

Margaret: And it was glorious. It was great. And I got to have magical powers. I mean, it was fantastic.

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Devon: But you have to commit.

Margaret: You have to commit to the bit. But that became engendered into the culture of my house, my property, my family, my whatever. So it takes a little bit of effort, but it *really* pays off. And start super early.

You can ask the question, is that a request or a statement or you just wanted me to know? Get curious about why they're saying what they're saying.

And lastly, it enables them to have the independence that we're trying to help them have. So allow them to do as many things as possible, and make the infrastructure of your home compliant with that family culture.

Devon: Yeah. I'll never forget. I was staying with you and your son was sleeping in your room with you, because I was there using his room. And you said he woke up in the middle of the night, like two in the morning, and he told you he wanted an apple and you were like, "You know where they are. You can go downstairs alone, in the dark, and get an apple. I'm not doing that."

Margaret: "I'm not doing that. But you can, if you want to."

Devon: Yeah, I think that's so important. And also with the adults in your life and the other people in your life. Particularly people you spend a lot of time with, like your partner, your parents. Just because they say they want something doesn't mean you have to do it. And it's also not even asking you to do it. Do something else instead.

Margaret: Yeah, practice really hearing what they are saying.

Devon: I love that. Where can we find you, Margaret?

Margaret: MargaretMasonTate.com. I would love to see everybody on Instagram @margaretmasonate. And if any of this sounds like something that you need help with, I am good to do it.

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Devon: Oh, yes, that is amazing. I would love to see you doing this for our listeners, and coaching, and getting people on the right track. Because you know what? It's hard, but it doesn't take that long. If you really do it.

Margaret: Commit to the bit, you won't regret it.

Devon: I remember when I was teaching, we would have lunch, all the people in my wing, all the people in the preschool wing would come to my classroom for lunch. And it got to this point where everyone was just griping all the time; complaining, whining. If you're miserable five out of seven days, you need to maybe make a change. I was just sick of it.

And I said, "We have a new policy here. We are not going to bitch and complain nonstop. That's not going to be the vibe. If you want to bitch and complain, please feel free but don't come to my classroom. Go do it in your classroom, which you're welcome to do. I love having everyone in here for lunch. But if you want to gripe and complain, you can go do that somewhere else."

And they grumbled about the thing. But they kept coming and they stopped bitching, and everyone was happier. It was a quick change and it made such a huge difference.

Margaret: Yeah, your willingness to be bold and to take a stance that is not super popular, but very effective, created some awesome change very quickly. And I know that people can do that in their own homes should they choose to. And we are here to support you as you do it. Let us know.

Devon: And while we're at it, I just want to throw out there again, do not make requests of your children that are not actually requests. "Do you want to get your diaper changed?" "No." "Well, too bad you have to." Don't do that. Stop doing that.

Margaret: Also because I'm annoyed by that question. I don't want to do anything. You and I were talking privately, texting each other, about how we would, given the opportunity, lie down in line at the bank.

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Devon: Oh, yeah. Anywhere.

Margaret: I'm ready to recline. I don't want to do anything. So, "Do you want to...?" No, I don't. Quit asking. It's annoying.

Devon: "Oh, but okay, it's time to do that. I have to do... Fine."

Margaret: I'm going to do it, but you're asking if I *want* to. So it's weird. Thank you so much for having me. I adore you, and I think that you're brilliant.

Devon: Oh, I think you're brilliant.

So here we are. You can find us, as always, @happyfamilyafter on Instagram. I would love, if you have questions or any comments or thoughts... we've got a weekly post about the podcast... you can put your comments. We can get some discussion going. I think that would be amazing.

And yes, so thank you so much for being with us. We will 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.

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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.