

## Ep #73: How to Parent Without Losing Yourself with Jacqueline Gates



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Devon Clement**

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Do you feel like you've lost yourself in parenthood or you're worried that you're going to? Our guest today talks all about how to find yourself again, what nesting really means, and how to have a great experience as yourself in parenthood. And just as a quick note, the very beginning of the interview, my microphone was a little messed up, so it might not sound great, but I fixed it pretty quickly. So if you can get through the first couple of minutes of me sounding not great, it gets better. 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.

Devon Clement: Hello and welcome back to the *Parenthood Prep* podcast. I am so excited to have another guest with us today. This is Jacqueline Gates. She is a coach. She is the leading lady. We have worked together for a long time. She's been one of my coaches and I've also just watched her work and watched the things she's done with other people.

And I felt like the work that she does and that she talks about is so important and so valuable to really anyone, but especially as you're becoming a parent or you're entering the next stage of parenthood or different things are changing in your life. And it can feel really overwhelming, it can feel like you're being turned upside down in a lot of ways. Your environment can change a lot. That's something else that she works on. So I thought it would just be really great to talk to her and get some info and some tips and strategies for this transitional phase of your life. So welcome, Jacqueline, hello.

Jacqueline Gates: Hello, hello, I'm so glad to be here. You are one of my favorite people to talk to.

Devon Clement: I love it. I love it. You too. You too. And your accent is just so charming. Tell us a little bit about yourself to get started.

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Jacqueline Gates: Well, I am a mom of 2. To start off, my kids are grown, my grandbabies are 8 and 6 now. They just started, well, the youngest started school a couple of days ago. So it's a whole new iteration for me. I was on stage for 25 years and my time on stage taught me that you can literally become any version of you that you wish. If you look at it like a theater role and you start crafting it accordingly. You adjust your environment, you set your stage, you change your wardrobe a little bit, you tweak the words you use, and you rehearse your role and eventually you find yourself it, right? You are it instead of I am playing it, you are it.

And so we do this as parents, we kind of imagine what it would be like if, and then we prepare for the time, you know, usually the 9 months, literally a gestation period. And then you are it. And what I love about this podcast is that it's preparing you before you get to the 9-month gestation. You get a chance to explore that identity before you've taken the leap even. And then even if you have taken the leap, a chance to just zoom out a little and have a look at how you're playing this particular very, very important role and how you would like to rework the scene if you had the chance.

Devon Clement: Yeah. There's so many shifts that happen. Like first you have the baby and now you're a parent of a newborn. And now you're a parent of a 6-month-old and now you're a parent of a toddler. And at each stage, there's like all these new and different challenges. And something that I love to talk about and get different perspectives on is the identity shift that happens because on the one hand, there's this societal pressure to like snap back to exactly who you were before, but now you have a kid. And then on the other hand, there's this whole idea of like, you are a completely different person now. You are someone's parent, you are now your whole world revolves around this person and you're like, no, but I'm still that other person I was before. She's still in there. He's still in there. They're still in there.

But I'm also this other person's parent and that's a new part of my identity. And I think we just haven't really figured out how to talk about balancing that. And

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that's something that's really important to me and I love how you how you talk about it as like a theater role.

Jacqueline Gates: The societal pressure is huge, of course. It's always going to be there. We need to pay attention to it. And I think we play roles in seasons, so to speak. So for example, I am still a mother, but my mothering isn't 24 hours a day the way it was when my kids arrived when they were yay big and, you know, really tiny. And what I found for myself, I had to run both identities at the same time. I initially thought I was going to be the most traditional mother and live for my kids and do all the home-baked stuff and all and be with them and do arts and crafts and, you know, like just immerse myself in their life.

And I very rapidly found out I am not that kind of mother. My mom-in-law was, my mom-in-law lived to be a mom. That was her whole identity. She just wanted to be a mom. She got married to be a mom. And so when I got to be a mom, I thought, okay, I'll do that too. It lasted probably 6 months and by that point, the child was teething and I was at my wit's end. I remember phoning my neighbor and saying, if I don't have time to be just Jackie, I'm going to explode. I don't know what's going to happen. So I actually went back on stage. In fact, I was auditioning when I was pregnant and I put my kid at the age of 3 or 4 weeks was down in the orchestra pit with her father while I was doing *Pirates of Penzance* up on the stage.

Devon Clement: I love that.

Jacqueline Gates: And I got a lot of side eye about that because they said, what kind of a mother leaves her newborn and goes off and is on stage for every night or 6 nights a week for 2 months. And the answer was eventually, I didn't think of it at the time, but the answer was my kind of mother, this kind of mother, this me. I had to stay enough being me to not lose myself in the identity of being my kids' mother.

And I am responsible enough an adult to not let being me be a detriment to my kids. So what that did was it made me hella good at organizing my home so that I could leave for the theater at 6 o'clock at night. So my kids had to be bathed

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and fed and ready for Granny or whichever babysitter came over so that I could leave for the theater at 6 to be on stage at 7. It made me madly organized and I was doing that twice a year. It was enough to keep reminding me of who I am even as I was in this immersive stage of being a very small person's mother.

And then as the seasons got, as the seasons changed, the kids got older, I was able to then, you know, do more shows or perhaps bring them with me. My daughter did Annie with me when I was starring, she was one of the girls. So it got to be both of us. But I hit a lot of flack for being on stage while my kids were so small. And what I knew and what my daughter tells me now is that it has made her the kind of woman she is now to watch me being as devoted to my selfhood as I was to being a mom.

Devon Clement: That's amazing. And I love that your daughter did Annie with you. That's so cute. Were you Miss Hannigan?

Jacqueline Gates: No, I wasn't. I was Grace Farrell, uh the secretary. I took the glamorous role.

Devon Clement: Oh, yes, of course. Of course. Well, I was going to say I can't picture you as Miss Hannigan, but you know, maybe you can play many roles.

Jacqueline Gates: Indeed. Yeah, it was a great show to do and it was particularly poignant to do it with her for sure.

Devon Clement: Yeah, no, I love that. That's so great. And you know, thinking about it just particularly in this context, one of my big things is like schedule and routine and sleep. You know, if you're working in the evening, you probably the kids are probably going to bed shortly after you leave. You're coming home, you know, after they've been asleep and then you're home during the day with them. So it's not even like you're missing out on that much. Not that there's anything wrong with working during the day either, but, you know, getting those routines in place. So yeah, I think that's a major piece of it is how to organize your life so that you are able to do the things that you need to do while you have your kids there.

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Jacqueline Gates: Right, absolutely.

Devon Clement: And that's something that you coach on, right?

Jacqueline Gates: Yes. It's because your environment supports who you are or it diminishes who you are. So if you can craft your environment to support who you want to be, I wanted to be a mom who was on stage. So I had to craft my environment to do that. I had to find the support squad that would come in and baby, you know, the fleet of babysitters. You know, and then also organize my day and my time with my kids so that I, each one became a priority. So when they got home from, like if the little one was at home, then obviously they're a priority. But once they got to school, then I would cram, not cram, but I would do as much as I could during school hours so that I could be there for them and heavily invested in homework and lunchtime and all those things in the time between they got home from school and the time I left for the theater. And it made, it made me honor all parts of me.

And I think that as far as the identity part, people change how they see you once you become a parent. And it's almost like this lens that drops over their faces and they can now see you as a parent and you are filtered through their identity as a parent or their thoughts of what you should be as a parent. And it is we hit up against it in all sorts of things. I did it, I got it in that I was leaving my leaving my kids every night. But other people will say, you know, what do you mean you don't make home bake cookies? No, I don't make home bake cookies.

Devon Clement: Oh, but no one gave your husband a hard time for, "leaving the kids all day."

Jacqueline Gates: No, not at all. You know, and of course not. Yeah, and actually he was in the orchestra when I was on stage, so he was also away or not, but no, nobody ever said anything sideways. Yeah, it was there, but it also comes into like, who's the hands-on parent? You know, my daughter works full-time, she has a gorgeous, powerful career, and her husband stays home and they have hit up against that. Who's the mother? Well, actually the dad is doing all the things that we see as traditionally - that we have seen as traditionally



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things. So when he's the one at the park with the knee highs, he gets sideways looks, not as much as he used to, but in the beginning, he certainly did.

Devon Clement: Well, I find too that in those situations, he probably gets a lot of praise as well.

Jacqueline Gates: He does. He does, especially from the women, interestingly enough. But I think, you know, when you are trying to balance this sort of sense of selfishness and I consider it a sacred selfishness to look after your selfhood while you're playing this role, you are going to have to do some inner work to say, what kind of a priority is this? Are there times where you become the priority and times when the baby's the priority and you're going to go up and down like this. That's life balance.

There are seasons where your kid takes up 24/7 of your time and there are other seasons where you can wave goodbye to and leave them with the babysitter without a second thought. And I think that identity holding your selfhood in as high a priority as you do theirs is important because then when you get to the time where you are an empty nester and you're saying goodbye, then you don't fall off the rails and wonder who the hell you are. And I get a lot of that because that's a lot of my work is with women who are in their act 3, is what I call act 3 of their lives. And it's this major life transition where suddenly they say, I'm not a mother anymore. And I said, no, yeah, you are, you are always going to be a parent, but you're just not full-time. You are exactly who you craft yourself to be. And it actually makes that transition so much easier when you've been doing it all along.

Devon Clement: Sure. Sure. Yeah, I think that's so important. And just thinking about the next stage while you're in the current stage because some are hard. Like when you're in that newborn stage, especially with the first baby, like you're just in it. You're in the trenches, like that's it. There's you know, there's things that are going to happen in the future that are not happening right now, like getting more sleep, getting out of the house, feeling, you know, physically able, if you if you've given birth, feeling physically able to do some of the things you've

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done before. Even if you've not given birth, you have this baby now, getting out of the house is so much more of a challenge.

Jacqueline Gates: The smaller the child, the more the luggage.

Devon Clement: Yeah, right. They somehow add so much stuff for being such tiny, tiny things.

Jacqueline Gates: Yeah, they're this big and you've got this mountain.

Devon Clement: Yeah. So just being able to imagine yourself doing these things again and preparing for that. And I think that it's easy to, I don't want to say like slide into despair because that sounds terrible, but sort of just not move on to the next phase, right?

Jacqueline Gates: When you're in the phase, it can feel like it's never ending. I remember that particularly with teething. I was fine with newborns, but dear God, once they started teething, it was just like you've got this crabby, obnoxious person that you cannot reason with and it's so hard to soothe them and your heart is breaking on their behalf and you're doing as much as you can, but neither of you are getting any sleep. It is a tough phase. And it's so hard to remember it is but a phase. It is just a season. And that's why, you know, talking to other parents and talking to people who, you know, can guide you through and just remind you that this is a season, it will pass, you will be intact when it passes, and you just do what you can with what you have in the moment to get yourself through it.

Devon Clement: Yeah, no, I think that's so important. But I also love what you teach about sort of thinking about and envisioning your next self and starting to play that role and getting prepared for that. So what advice do you have to people who are in those trenches, whether it's newborn, teething, toddlerhood, even pregnancy, you know, there's so much going on there or even prior to that, the preparation phases, maybe someone who's going through, you know, fertility struggles and wants to be pregnant or wants to have that baby and just you feel



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like this stage is terrible, but you don't know when it's ever going to end. What are some advice and strategies that you have for that?

Jacqueline Gates: So there's a couple of things. The first thing is to keep crafting your future self. And a light way to play with it is, won't it be wonderful when? Won't it be wonderful when he's got all his teeth and he's not feeling so horrible anymore? Won't it be wonderful when I know what I'm doing and things are organized and won't it be wonderful when I have my first full night sleep, right? You know, won't it be wonderful when the small one sleeps through? Won't it be wonderful when we can all go on a on a field trip or on a on an outing and I don't have to take like all this luggage with me. I don't have to take the stroller and I don't have to take the huge bag with the diapers and I remember the first time I went grocery shopping with my kid and we didn't have to take a diaper bag because they had been potty trained. And it was like, look at all this spaciousness and freedom. I can carry my own handbag. This is amazing, right?

And you don't have to do the whole journaling thing unless, I mean, I always recommend journaling, but sometimes that just feels like another to-do. A light touch going, won't it be wonderful when will keep you noticing that this is a phase. Make your future self as alluring as you can by noticing the contrast where you are now, and then going, won't it be wonderful when so that you craft what you want. And you just keep moving. And if it doesn't overwhelm you, and I always put that caveat here, try adding a few of your future self times into your current day. So if you can grab an hour's worth of babysitting and go and have a coffee date with your partner or go and have a pedicure or something that just reminds you that this is waiting for you when this season is over.

Devon Clement: Yeah.

Jacqueline Gates: You can do so many small things that remind you that your future is being crafted every moment of the present.

Devon Clement: I love that. And I think, you know, to the example of, like you said, going out with all the stuff, and then it pares down. I remember, you know, nannying for like a baby versus a toddler, you go out with a toddler, maybe you

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just bring like one diaper and wipes in a Ziploc and you stick it in your purse, like, you know, whatever. Although I will say I took, I have this very clear memory, this was years ago. Oh my god, she's like grown up and moving to Europe now. But I was like, oh, we're just going to the bookstore for an hour. We're I don't need to bring a diaper. And she had like the biggest poop. Like I was like, okay, so bringing a diaper is an insurance policy against needing one. But you know, you do.

So even I think envisioning something like, oh, I can't wait till I can leave the house without 75 pounds of luggage. Maybe you just go for a walk around the block with the baby in a carrier or in the stroller and you don't bring all that stuff. And you just say, you know, I just want to envision a life where we leave the house and I don't have to bring a rolling suitcase with me. Like, let's just walk around the block. She's not going to need a bottle, she's not going to need a diaper. Like we're just going to go for a walk and I'm going to feel unencumbered and I'm just going to bring my handbag.

Or, you know, maybe you miss doing your hair and putting makeup on. Like just do that one day. Think about those things that you miss and try to find those opportunities. Like you said, won't it be wonderful when I can do my makeup every day again? Not that you should have to, but if that's something that's important to you. It, you know, it's not even typically something that's super important to me, but in 2020 when we were all quarantined and there were days like where I just I just blew out my hair and put on a face and put on an outfit just to be in my apartment because I wanted to feel normal. I wanted to feel like I was a person.

Jacqueline Gates: Yes.

Devon Clement: And who cares if your whole day consists of you're just going to be home taking care of the baby and you don't have anywhere to be. If, you know, you want to look nice, you know, look nice.

Jacqueline Gates: Yeah, do it. It's for you. You are your first audience, first and foremost.

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Devon Clement: Exactly. The way you think about yourself, the way you view yourself, you are your first audience. And most of us are far too critical. We're just like an audience of inner mean girls.

Jacqueline Gates: Yeah. And we need to give ourselves a chance to have the ones that give ourselves a standing ovation, just occasionally.

Devon Clement: I love that. And that's so important. And again, it doesn't have to be about appearance. It can be anything. Like you want to get back to reading books. Like just read a book while your baby is napping. You're allowed. A big thing I preach on is like do your chores when the baby's awake.

Jacqueline Gates: Yes. I love that.

Devon Clement: Don't wait for nap time. Nap time is your time. Do your stuff that you need to do while the baby's awake. They don't care if you're on the phone with the bank or whatever. Like do that stuff while your baby is awake. You are not their entertainer. You are their parent and you have a life to live and you have things to do and then nap time can be your downtime.

Jacqueline Gates: I love that. That is so counterculture and I adore you for it because I wish I had heard that.

Devon Clement: And then, you know, it also, and my regular listeners are going to be sick of this because I say it all the time, but it's, it models for your kids. Because one thing I hate is that a lot of kids now think that they just play with their toys and make a mess and have a great time. Then they go down for a nap and the magical fairies clean it all up while they're sleeping and they wake up and everything's back to normal. Same thing at night.

Oh, I ate my lunch, you know, my dish was dirty. I woke up, the high chair was clean, everything was clean. I mean, whatever, usually they do go down for a nap right after lunch and you do kind of want to just scoop them and put them in the crib. That's fine. But like let them see what goes into the management of

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their stuff, the management of a home so that they don't think the magical fairies do it.

Jacqueline Gates: Yeah, otherwise they start believing it's Disney and, you know, the forest animals are coming in to do your housework. Well, that never happens.

Devon Clement: Trust me, I tried that with the cats and kittens. They just make it worse.

Jacqueline Gates: Ah, dear, you're going to have to train them better.

Devon Clement: It's a disaster. They do not do anything.

Jacqueline Gates: Oh, I wanted to speak to one other thing about the environment though. If you happen to be the one who falls pregnant and you have the 9 months of gestation, there's a lot of talk about nesting, about getting your environment ready for the baby. Please, please nest for yourself as well. Make sure that you have, you are preparing your environment to be a parent. You need what I call a recharging station. You need a spot where you can sit down and the things you love and that soothe you are close by.

So whether it's a bar of chocolate that you don't share with anybody or it's the sound, you know, you've got in my day, it was headphones and a little Walkman thing that had my meditation CD on it, right? And then a special blanket that was just for you to curl up. You don't have to share it. You don't have to get it hurled on by the small person. This is for you. Please make sure that you nest for you because you are going to need it as much as they do. Make sure that you have clothes that will serve you, that are easily washed, a good feeding bra, if that's going to be what you're going to be doing. Make sure that you have support in place. Nest for who you're going to be, not just for the new person that's coming.

Devon Clement: Oh, I love that. That's so tremendous. And that's actually what I was going to ask you about is nesting strategies and I think that's so huge. One of the tips I give people is keep your self-care stuff where you're sitting most of

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the time with the baby. So if you're nursing or if you're in that phase where you're holding the baby to sleep and you're always like in a certain spot on the couch or you're in the rocking chair in the baby's room or whatever, like put your lotion there. Whatever you want to do. Like, I love, I'm like constantly like filing my nails. I love like finding the little sharp corners. Like I keep a nail file in my car. I, you know, would keep one on the baby station and just, you know, file my nails. I love flossing my teeth. Like if I have something stuck in my teeth, it drives me crazy. So I have like little floss picks everywhere.

So like, you know, while you're laying there with the baby, if it feels good for you, like floss your teeth, you know, do stuff that feels like you're caring for yourself. And enjoyable stuff too. The books you like, the music you like, you know, oh gosh, it drives me nuts when people have like a tiny baby and I get that they like it for the novelty, but when you have like people have a tiny baby and they listen to like kids' music, I'm like, the baby does not care whether you listen to the wheels on the bus or Mariah Carey and you are going to be so sick of the wheels on the bus in 2 years.

Jacqueline Gates: Oh my god, yes.

Devon Clement: Listen to your music now, watch your programs now, do the things that you want that serve you, that feel good to you.

Jacqueline Gates: My kids grew up listening to me practice opera and my musical theater. That is the soundtrack of their of their youth. But I'll also say that part of what I taught them from the time they were tiny was a timer. I got a little egg timer that would ping and the first time I needed a few minutes to learn an aria, to learn a particularly sticky part of the aria. And I said to them, unless there's blood or smoke, mommy is not to be disturbed until the bell goes off, until the egg rings. It was this little egg-shaped thing. And I gave them the timer and I said, all right, it's 2 minutes. I'm going to close the door and I'm going to sing and when it goes off, when the egg rings, you can come in. And the 2 of them sat outside the door holding this egg timer, like I had gone to Timbuktu, you know, it was just the most...

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Devon Clement: Oh, yeah.

Jacqueline Gates: And it was, of course, when you've only been alive 3 years and 1 year, a couple of minutes is a long time. The context is such. But and eventually, you know, we were getting, I was getting half an hour because they would bring their books and their coloring and they would sit right outside the door with their timer. And it taught them such an amazing skill about me being separate from them, but still safe and available. And then, you know, my son, who is an incredible introvert and was born at the age of 40, he was born an old man. He used to take the timer and say to his sister, you can't talk to me until the bell goes off. And then he would turn it and he would stomp off into his room, close the door and so she had to honor that.

She had to say, you know, until the bell goes off, until the egg rings, I can't nag him or bother him or whatever the things which she was doing that he had enough of. And so it was an amazing skill and I really wouldn't have done that if I hadn't been tending to my selfhood in the time that I was being like 99% mom. So they do model, they do follow your guidance and when you honor yourself in the skincare things, in the nail care, in the self care that you keep doing, it teaches them in ways that you can't really see, not until much later.

Devon Clement: Yeah. No, that's tremendous. And I love what you said about the timer and how they had to get used to it. Because yeah, learning something like that, practicing something like that, they're not going to be great at it right away. And you probably don't remember because it was so many years ago, but I'm sure that the first week there were times when they interrupted you during the timer and you said it's not time yet. And you didn't give up. You know, you have to be consistent and the kids learn those things.

One of the things I love that I teach is we went tubing with my friends and their 3 small kids. So 2 little girls and 1 little girl and the girls were, you know, in like a little boat, but they wanted to sit on this one's lap and then they wanted to climb over here and then they wanted food and then they wanted a drink and then they, you know, this and that and they like always wanted something. And it was



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starting to get a little annoying to the adults and I said, you guys have 5 minutes to ask for whatever you want, figure out where you want to sit, figure out what snacks you want, your drinks, ask for all of that stuff. We will give it to you and then when that 5 minutes is up, we get 5 minutes of no requests. There will be no moving positions, there will be no changing. You guys can talk to each other, it doesn't have to be quiet. We are just done with requests for 5 minutes.

And we did it. And at the end of the 5 minutes, they requests, of course, they were still asking for things and we were like, no, this is the 5 minutes of break time, no requests. And honestly, after like the first minute, I didn't set a timer or anything, they just stopped asking for stuff. It just went on for a very, very long period because we set that tone and we said, you know, and I preached the same thing about bedtime, like prior to lights out time, whatever time that is, you can have whatever you want.

You can have another hug, you can have another story, you can have a drink of water, you can pee, you can have a tissue, whatever, but once that light changes or whatever happens that it's lights out, then we're done. Then that's it and now it's bedtime. And they will try so hard. They will to get, you know, one last thing, one more thing and that's it. You know, this is now, this is now our time. So having that bedtime as well, I think is really tremendous. And again, that's your break time. That's not time to clean up, you know, their toys. They do that. You do that with them before they get ready for bed.

Jacqueline Gates: Agreed. Agreed.

Devon Clement: Bedtime is your time.

Jacqueline Gates: Yeah. Yep, yep, yep. For sure.

Devon Clement: I love all of this. The nesting for yourself, I think that's just groundbreaking. I mean, you don't hear that anywhere.

Jacqueline Gates: No.

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Devon Clement: You don't. And having, you know, having consumables that you like, your favorite drinks, your favorite snacks. So you mentioned the chocolate. Yeah. Like all those things and get it ready for yourself. Give your future self that gift of having it ready so that you're not, you know, okay, now I'm sitting down and rocking the baby and holding the baby for a nap and oh crap, my, you know, iced tea is all the way over there and now I'm stuck here.

Jacqueline Gates: Yeah, exactly. Have you have your restoration station right next to you and make it so that it's a priority because you know, you're as important as the small person. You both have to make it through.

Devon Clement: Yes. Yes, your restoration station. I love it. Well, now I want to talk about my very, very favorite thing that you've taught and you taught me so many wonderful things, but this is my very, very favorite thing, the file of fabulousness. What is it? How can people use it? Tell us everything. Also, speaking of fabulousness, I want to point out that her grandkids call her glamma because she's so glamorous.

Jacqueline Gates: And I'm far too young and too glamorous to be called a granny. So I'm glamma.

Devon Clement: Oh, absolutely.

Jacqueline Gates: The file of fabulousness is a collection of all the wonderful things people have said about you and all the things that you're hella proud of. This gets important when you are doing something you've never done before and your brain will deviate to telling you that you are firstly woefully incompetent, sure to kill this kid and that you don't know what the hell you're doing, which is actually valid and therefore difficult to defend against. However, if you have in your file of fabulousness a whole list of times where you tried something where you didn't know what the hell you were doing and you did really well with it, that kind of offsets the inner mean girl thing, the inner critic, right?

When you are learning something, it's such prime real estate for your brain to default to try and scoot you back to safety. And safety for it means don't do

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anything different. This is the paradox of the human brain. We thrive through change. We growth is change. Identity shifting, becoming a parent, it is a massive change and your brain hates every minute of it because it doesn't know how to be a parent yet. You're still learning. And so if you happen to have a particularly strong inner critic, like I do, it is then prime real estate for you to beat up on yourself simply because you don't know what you're doing just yet and you're not sure that what you're doing is going to work out.

So when you have a file of fabulousness and you, say, read that on such and such a day, you tried this and somebody said, oh my God, look how well you're doing. That's amazing. You learned so fast. Then you go, somebody actually said that. That is truth. I can believe then that I can learn how to do this. I can be good at this eventually, right? I am practicing. I can be kind to myself while I'm doing it. I can remember that just for me, for example, I can remember that just the same way I learned to sing the song when it was particularly difficult, I can learn how to soothe my kid when they're teething. I can be patient with them because I learned to be patient with me. I can read in my file of fabulousness evidence that I am not who my inner critic is currently trying to get me to believe I am.

And all you need to do is start, make a file. Mine initially was a notebook where I used to write it out by hand or in the days I had a printer, I used to print it out and then I would stick it into my book. So it became like this scrapbook. And I remember sitting, I mean, I have this memory of having, I think it was my second one. I had never been as tired as I was when I had a 2-year-old and a newborn. And I remember sitting with this baby on my lap and I was going through, it was a theater book of all my rave reviews and all the things nice things people had said and just tears down my face thinking, at some point, I'll get back to this. I'll get back to being just Jackie up there on the stage and my kid will be proud of me and I'll have a good night's sleep.

And I'm just remembering all these things that said, yes, I was good on stage and yes, I can learn new things and it just made me feel like I could get through a particularly stressful and hard time of my life. And so what I do it now when I

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teach it is maybe you're going for a job promotion, maybe you're trying to stop smoking because you don't want to smoke around your child. Maybe you're trying to heal from something and you've got the small people, maybe you're just trying to learn how to get on with this new human that's going to be in your life for the next X many years. Remembering the good things you've done, having a way to present it to yourself as kind of outside evidence is the best antidote to the inner mean girl that I've ever come across.

Devon Clement: It's so tremendous and it's been so valuable for me. I mean, I'm a Leo, so I love hearing good things about myself, but and you know, it doesn't have to be complicated. When you had first mentioned it to me or told me about it, it sounded a little overwhelming. I was like saving things on the computer or this or that or printing them out or whatever. I just keep it as a note on my phone and you can put screenshots in there and you can put, you know, typed stuff. A lot of it is like, you know, a text message that a client sent that their baby is doing so great and they're so happy that I helped them. I just copy that text message. I paste it into the note. It's just one thing after another. It's screenshots. I'm looking at it right now on my phone, you know, just so that I can kind of share.

A lot of texts, a lot of social media screenshots when we have sometimes a discussion online and I get a good response to that. The first time my business made a million dollars. I have a photograph of a card a friend sent me, um a thank you card that she sent. And I took a picture of it and I put it in my note on my file of fabulousness. Oh, one day I do the New York Times spelling bee every day and it was really big and I got Queen B. So I took a screenshot of Queen B, 68 words, 453 points. Well done me. You know, so and sometimes like when I'm bored, I just look at it and I'm just like, oh, look at this. Wow, okay, that was such a nice thing that person said, you know, or sometimes it's just like a funny thing. You know, maybe it's a comment I made on a post that got a lot of a lot of likes or somebody responding. At one point my credit score went up a bunch of points. I took a screenshot of that. Just like all kinds of stuff that just make me feel good about myself and you know, it can be anything. You can jot down a

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note like, oh today the mom at the park told me my kid was dressed really cute or whatever.

Jacqueline Gates: We slept through the night. I remember that one particularly. So yeah, it is and a file of fabulousness is the antidote to the blahs. It is the end. I mean, I have one and I dove into it this morning because I've been just in the blahs for a minute and this morning I thought my file of fabulousness, that's going to help. And it did. Just reading through, it's just like, oh, yeah, okay, I'm good. I can do this. I know what to do. I can move forward. This was also just a phase, right? And so don't make it complicated. Don't make it a chore, but and do it in whatever way works for you. So Devon's shared hers. I'm much more of a paper and pencil person, so I do mine.

I've had people who just do it as actual pictures. They, you know, they take pictures and then they've got a slideshow on their phone. I've got somebody else who's got who works on a desktop and hers is an actual folder and she just keeps everything in there. It is so easy, copy paste, just or else just, you know, cut it out and make it simple. And I will say that the thing you need to learn most is to remember to watch the damn thing, is to check on it. And so what I used to do sometimes is put a post-it note on my bathroom mirror that says, have you checked FOF? File of fabulousness. And just a big question mark. And that would be enough to say, no, I haven't. And the thought of the fact that I've got a massive file with good things that people say about me is often enough to say, oh yeah, I'm just letting my, you know, I'm letting this get the better of me. I'm not this situation, I'm not this season. I am more than that and I can hold it all.

Devon Clement: I think too, even including maybe some videos and stuff too of your kids because, you know, I'm just thinking as we're talking about this, they can be pretty bad critics too. I mean, that phase where, you know, you do everything, you create this wonderful day for them and you take them to the fair and you do all these things and then you get home and for some reason they tell you that they hate you and you're the worst mom ever and you never do anything for them and you're like, what the fuck are you talking about? Yeah, I've

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been there. Having something to counteract that in those moments, those videos, you know, you're the best dad ever or whatever.

Jacqueline Gates: I didn't have video in the days when my kid was little. We didn't have cell phones, and I'm dating myself. But I decided not to do theater when her little brother arrived. She was 2 1/2, nearly 3. And I thought I was going to be the good mom and I was going to stay home and look after my kids and not do theater. I thought maybe I just give myself 2 or 3 years. Just not do theater, right? And I was feeling so virtuous about it all. And slowly the resentment started to build up until one day, I was very snippy. I know I was. And madam turned to me and she said, I like you better when you're on stage.

And it was just like out of the mouths of babes. Here we go. And I took the next audition for a role that I really wanted and that was the end of that for the next 15 years or so until we came to the states. That's what I did. And it was just really, enormous evidence and I wrote that, one of the first things that I wrote into a file of fabulousness was Amy saying, I like you better when you're on stage. And it was because I'm a better mother when I'm on stage. I'm more myself when I'm on when I'm looking after myself.

Devon Clement: If there was any one thing that I could just magically make people understand, it would be that you are not a better parent when you are giving up everything that's important to you.

Jacqueline Gates: Exactly.

Devon Clement: And your kids notice.

Jacqueline Gates: Yeah. You know, my mother would say martyrdom will kill you. I know. And it will. Being a martyr, nobody likes it. And it's just like, and you can, you can try and pretend as much as you want, but kids are incredibly observant, very intuitive, usually, kind of, they can read things because their survival depends on it. They read cues and nuances of energy that you we don't give them enough credit for. And so when you're doing something with them and



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you'd rather be doing something else or you haven't had your me time and you're just having to do more of their time, they know, they can feel it.

And yes, you're doing it out of love, but it doesn't feel that way. You have to love yourself and honor yourself the same way as you love and honor them. You don't cease to be an identity simply because you become a parent. You then have dual roles. You are you as a parent. You are not simply a parent. And so we are so fortunate to be parents now because in the old days, we didn't have a choice. Our mothers and our grandmothers had no choice in the matter. The parents had such distinct roles. They just didn't get a chance to actually question whether the role was correct for them or not. And so this way, we get to honor where we are in the world, how we are in the world, and who we want to be in the world so that we can then set a good example for the generation that we're raising.

Devon Clement: Yeah, cuz we don't think about that, I think. We don't think about the modeling that we're doing for them that we're showing them that - and this is a whole other, I mean, I could talk about this all day, but like do you want your kid to be miserable when they're a parent? No, of course not. And your parents don't want you to be miserable either. We don't see ourselves as that same level of personhood as our child.

Jacqueline Gates: Exactly. And if you want to raise a person in the world that is articulate and self-honoring and follows their own guidance, you have to do that first. You have to lead the way and you have to do that in the face of those who love you most because often that's where we want to kind of drop our priorities. We put them above our own and there is a season for that, but it's a lot shorter than you think. And then at some point, you have to remember who you are as a parent, not that you are just a parent.

Devon Clement: So tremendous. Jacqueline, thank you so much. Is there any last things you would like to leave us with?

Jacqueline Gates: Go start your file of fabulousness. Start your file of fabulousness for you, yes, and as a parent, and just start it. Start curating it

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because there will be, there will be a day where reading it will change everything and you'll be so glad. Think of it as a gift to your future self on a day that they need it the most because that is what it is and it just helps. And then nest for yourself as well as your kid. You are the reason they will thrive. You have to lead the way.

Devon Clement: I love that. I love that. And where can people find you online?

Jacqueline Gates: I am at JacquelineGates.com and I am on Facebook quite a bit, starting to heading over onto Instagram and YouTube, but basically if you Google my name, you'll find me.

Devon Clement: And that is J, the fancy way, J A C Q U E L I N E.

Jacqueline Gates: And Gates as in Bill Gates, but no relation. Unfortunately.

Devon Clement: No relation. I have a such a pet peeve when somebody's on a podcast and they're like, my name is Dr. Smer. and you can find me at smer.com and I'm like, what? What? What? Like I'm on Instagram as at smer, like, what?

Jacqueline Gates: Yep, J. J A C Q U E L I N E-Gates on my website, but just Jacqueline Gates, you'll find me.

Devon Clement: Perfect. Perfect. Thank you so much. You are wonderful and this is this has been tremendous. Thank you. Thank you.

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