

Ep #95: How to Keep Your Friendships Alive After Having a Baby

PARENTHOOD PREP

with

Devon Clement



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With Your Host

Devon Clement

Ep #95: How to Keep Your Friendships Alive After Having a Baby

Devon Clement: How I Met Your Mother, too. Like the married couple has the baby and is still in the exact same routine with their friends all the time.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah, and we never had to see that kid.

Welcome to *Parenthood Prep*, the only show that helps sleep-deprived parents and overwhelmed parents-to-be to 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. Today, we have our favorite guest, Margaret Mason Tate. Hi, Margaret.

Margaret Mason Tate: Hi.

Devon Clement: And we are going to be talking about our favorite topic and one that we are world-renowned experts in: friendship.

Margaret Mason Tate: We're getting meta. We're getting very meta.

Devon Clement: We're getting very meta. And if you are new, you may not know Margaret. She is my best friend in the world. We have been best friends for nigh on 11 years now.

Margaret Mason Tate: 11 years.

Devon Clement: And Margaret has a child and I do not. And so we have, I think, complementary perspectives on how your friendships and relationships change when you become a parent and whose fault it is. Stay tuned for that, and how you can fix it.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah.

Devon Clement: Because I think you, you miss your friends.

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Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah.

Devon Clement: Can I say something that is maybe a tiny bit judgmental?

Margaret Mason Tate: I think that we should start this off with exactly that.

Devon Clement: I think it is the most adorable thing in the world when someone's like niece or nephew or friend's kid is their bestie, their best friend. But I think when it's a mom and she's like, "My six-month-old is my best friend." I'm like, girl.

Margaret Mason Tate: First of all, you just met her. I will be goddamned if I allow some six-month floozy to usurp my place. Absolutely not.

Devon Clement: No. You have a best friend, and they are a grown adult who can talk to you.

Margaret Mason Tate: Correct.

Devon Clement: And I will say she puts her money where her mouth is because she is very jealous of my niece, Audrey, and her being my little bestie.

Margaret Mason Tate: I don't care for that. We just met her.

Devon Clement: Just, it's true. It's true. I mean, it's only been a year. That's 10% of the time I've known, not even 10% of the time I've known you. So when I see someone who's like, "Out and about with my bestie," I'm like, I hope you have adult friends, too.

Margaret Mason Tate: We hope that you have adult friendships, and we hope it so much that we're willing to have a job where we talk to people around the world about how to make sure they have friendships. It's that important.

Devon Clement: It's so important. And they're obviously not going to stay the same when you have a kid. Things are going to change, but I have heard through all my years working in like the baby and parenting space, and also just being exposed to it, because even when I'm not at work, I'm in mom groups

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online and parent groups online and hearing you know... And let's be real, like we're very gender-neutral on this podcast, but this really is more of an issue for people who are raised and socialized as women, because when you're a dad or you were raised as a man, you don't really have as much issue maintaining your friendships.

Margaret Mason Tate: All of my fun memories from my youth as a child were with my father, were with my father and his friends. Everyone.

Devon Clement: Literally same. Literally same. They do not, they are unhindered by having a kid. They still talk to their buddies. They still go out. They still do all those things with or without the baby and kids in tow. So, you know, this is obviously we're always speaking to all parents, but some issues, I think, hit a little harder when you are socialized one way or the other.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah, this is Mom Town for sure.

Devon Clement: If you were raised with all the guilt and the judgment of wanting, you know, everyone wanting you to be a perfect mom, this is going to be harder.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah.

Devon Clement: So that's really who we're addressing. And I think both because both of us are women and identify as women, we're in that world a little bit more. We see, you know, our experience is a little bit more in that area as well.

Margaret Mason Tate: See, and I thought you were going to say that because we are both perfect, we have the ability right to make some commentary. And so that's what I thought you were going to say.

Devon Clement: Well, that's what this whole podcast is about really, is we're perfect and we're going to help you get there too.

Margaret Mason Tate: Absolutely.

Devon Clement: Obviously, we're kidding.

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Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah.

Devon Clement: So, yeah, so like I would see in these mom groups I was in online, the moms being like, "Oh, my friends without kids just don't understand what it's like. They just, you know, still want me to go out with them and I just can't do that now because I'm a mom."

Margaret Mason Tate: Mhm.

Devon Clement: And then on the friend side of things, you're like, my friend has like completely ditched me for this baby that she's known for five minutes.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah, brand new baby, nobody asked me if I wanted to add a baby to this friend group. This is the sitcom of my life. Nobody talked to me about this huge cast change.

Devon Clement: A new character?

Margaret Mason Tate: Okay, wow. Wow.

Devon Clement: Yeah.

Margaret Mason Tate: And I got to say it's been done.

Devon Clement: You know, it feels a little ratings scrub if you're asking me.

Margaret Mason Tate: It's derivative and it's obviously for sweeps. With that said, it's going to keep happening. And so if you are a person who is going to be friends with other people, this episode is for you because you're going to figure out whose fault it is that your friendships are becoming weird after kids are added to the situation.

Devon Clement: Yeah, stay tuned for that. That's coming up. Obviously, when you're a brand new parent, even when you're expecting, things are different, right? Your biology is different. Your whole body and brain are consumed with this child, with this new human being. And that, that immediate postpartum,

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post-birth period, one month, two months, three months, getting into like four months, you're still just mush.

Margaret Mason Tate: A bunch of goo.

Devon Clement: You are not... You're just a bunch of goo.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah.

Devon Clement: With this other like blob of goo just attached to you all the time. So, we're going to really lower our expectations during that time. You know, and as a friend, like you want to be there for your friend who is, who is this ball of goo. Sometimes that looks like coming over their house and folding laundry for them. Sometimes it looks like letting them ignore you for a few weeks while they figure their stuff out, especially if you're long distance, especially if you're not like right there in front of their face.

You know, I think the expectations of child-free friends when visiting new parents is that it's going to be similar to a visit in the old days. I remember a girlfriend of mine talking about how people came over and she's like, "I was holding my eyelids open. I was so tired." And they would not leave. You know, and it was after like 7 or 8 p.m. and they were and probably laughing it up with dad and not, you know, noticing that mom was ready for bed. I said, in that circumstance, go to bed.

I literally did that Friday night. We had friends over watching the Knicks game, and we were all hanging out and chatting and it got late and I was like, "Hey, I'm tired. I'm going to start tucking myself in. If you want to continue to talk, you can come downstairs, talk to me while I get ready for bed, and then I'm just going to get in bed and go to sleep and you can do whatever you want."

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah, and have that be the truth.

Devon Clement: And that's what we did.

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Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah and be able to tell the truth about that and then also get into the habit of telling the truth and being real about those things so that your friends can trust that when you say that, you actually mean it and are that they really can do whatever they would like to do.

Devon Clement: Yeah. And honestly, I think tell the truth is a big motto we're going to attach to here. There's a couple points I really want to make today and tell the truth is one of them. Continue communication. Be honest with each other. If your friend keeps inviting you to come out for your kickball league that you used to be in together and you don't want to do that, just say, "I don't give a shit about kickball right now. I love you. I would still like to spend time with you. Can we figure out something else that works?"

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah, because I don't actually want to keep saying no to you, but I really very much want to keep saying no to kickball.

Devon Clement: Right. Well, and I think it's, I mean, this is part of a larger conversation because I have this even with my friends without kids. Just be honest, don't say, "Oh, sorry, I can't make kickball this week. Oh, no." Because what that says is, "Maybe I can do it next week." And they're not going to get your incredibly subtle hint that this is not what you want to be doing. You can be honest and say, "Kickball is not it for me right now."

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah. And that shortens the length of time between you and getting what you want, which is to spend time with your friend and to not be involved in kickball anymore. And surely, we don't have to say this, but I feel like we do have to say this just because of the internet culture of it all. Kickball doesn't have to be kickball, kids. It could be...

Devon Clement: It's a metaphor, Daddy. No, I don't want you to buy me a hat.

Margaret Mason Tate: Oh, I miss. We should watch all of Friends. Please come to me immediately and let's watch all of Friends.

Devon Clement: We should.

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Margaret Mason Tate: And we're talking about goo. And I just want to make sure that we are scientists, the scientists that we are, in discussing that it's that's actually, we're joking, but it's not actually a joke. The stuff that's happening to the gray matter of the pregnant person's brain is absolutely shit your pants insane. It's so wild.

Devon Clement: Sometimes literally shit your pants.

Margaret Mason Tate: Their brain is literally being totally reorganized. It's like doing mushrooms every day for nine months. It is...

Devon Clement: But so much worse.

Margaret Mason Tate: Oh, but terrible. But like...

Devon Clement: Not the fun part where you're like laughing at hilarious bits about raw onions.

Margaret Mason Tate: There are no flamingos telling you their name on a shower curtain. It's not the cool kind. It is like the, "I thought this was called a pen. What do you mean this isn't a pen anymore?" Like it really genuinely changes your brain in profound ways. And so as much as I hate the like, you just don't get it kind of thing about what this is and non-parents and parents having friendships, if you have not experienced a pregnancy, it is very challenging to accurately communicate what that feels like from the inside because it is not fun to feel like an absolute idiot, especially if you're high achieving and otherwise have your shit together. It's very frustrating to liquefy into goo.

Devon Clement: And, you know, I think if there is a type of friendship, not every friendship, but there's a type of friendship where you can say, "Hey, I'm coming over. I don't care that you're goo. I just want to sit with you and you can be," you know, if you say, "Hey, can I stop by?" and they're like, "Oh, I'm in my pajamas" or maybe they don't say that out loud. Tell the truth. Say, "I would love for you to stop by. I am a disgusting mess that hasn't showered. I am literally goo. Do you mind that? And can you pick up bagels on your way?"

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Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah, I want to be goo with a bagel in my tummy.

Devon Clement: Yeah, or you say as the friend, "I'm going to come over. I don't care that you're goo and I'm bringing bagels." And then you get there and you say, "Is there anything I can help with?" And they're like, "Oh, no, we're fine." But the sink is full of dishes, load the dishwasher. Just do it. Come over, bring the bagels, deal with the goo. Tell the truth. I don't care that you're goo. I am going to have another controversial take.

Margaret Mason Tate: Great.

Devon Clement: The goo ends and if you are the parent, you need to get out of the trenches eventually. The newborn stage is, oh, I love that you said this in the notes, exhausting and often tyrannical.

Margaret Mason Tate: I thought you'd like that.

Devon Clement: You're sleep deprived, you're feeding constantly, you're constantly trying to figure out what's going on, what does this baby need. You can't schedule around a baby the way you can schedule around meetings at work. You know, you're at the pediatrician every other day, but eventually, and I'm going to say it's earlier than you think, obviously, you're not going to be fully back to yourself for two years, a long, long, long time. But by two months, three months, you have a bit of a routine. You have a little bit more sleep, or maybe a lot more sleep, ideally a lot more sleep. You have a little bit of your brain back. You can put on a clean shirt and brush your teeth if your friend is coming over and that is good for you.

Margaret Mason Tate: It's good for everybody involved.

Devon Clement: And if you find that if you're at that point, two months, three months, and you can't do that, you need to talk to someone, because that is a red flag for postpartum mood disorders, postpartum depression, anxiety, that kind of stuff. And as the friend in that situation, if your friend, and I'm again, I'm not saying one week, two weeks, a month, I'm saying eight weeks, two months,

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three months, four months, if they're still non-functional, raise some red flags. Talk to their partner, talk to their parent, talk to them, say maybe we should talk to your doctor.

But if you're just like, "Oh, I'm just in this routine now where I'm like in," and this is rich coming for me who is still in my pajamas at noon, but I only get dressed if I'm leaving the house. But I did brush my teeth. There's a time where you can say, "Okay, I'm ready to put a little bit of effort back into my relationships, into my friendships, and maybe you're not going to kickball, but maybe you are going out to lunch, getting out of the house. Maybe having them over and you're ordering the food instead of them or you're whatever. You can get out of the trenches and you can feel very good.

You know, I noticed in the pandemic, like in the real like quarantine like home alone all the time phase, I would only see Alex on the weekends. Some days I would just be real down, real miserable, and I would fix my hair and I would put a little makeup on, even though I wasn't going anywhere or doing anything. And just getting dressed in normal clothes, and I'm not like a glamour girl, but like zhuzhing up my hair, putting on my lipstick and putting on like a clean shirt made all the difference in the world, just in feeling alive.

Margaret Mason Tate: Absolutely. It's huge. And I think that like once you're able to get out of the trenches, that you should. And I think that like the trenches for the child-free folk, they also exist. And like especially if it's somebody that you're seeing all the time, it's one of your closest friends, and they kind of drop off because of a new baby. If you have not planned ahead in any way for additional social structural support, that is going to be really, really, really shocking to you, like going from constant interaction to a quarantine.

And if you don't make plans for that, then that's going to be your trenches and you've got to do the work to get out of that ahead of time like for yourself. You've got to figure out, okay, I want to add some more, you know, if we're going to continue this kickball metaphor, like if we want to add some more kickball leagues or if you want to decide, make some intention around, okay, I'm going to

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strengthen these other friendships that I have because like this person that I really love and enjoy spending time with and can't just can't wait to talk to all the time is going to have a rough, let's say, 13 weeks, and that's a whole season of a year. That's a whole season of a year.

Devon Clement: Yeah, sure. Well, and truly, when the things that you and your friend are used to doing, and I say this from personal experience, this is my life. We go out at night. We go out to dinner. We go watch sports. We go out dancing. Friday night, we're going to a show.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah, you go to plays.

Devon Clement: Like we go to the theater. And I mean, like a music show, but like we go to these like late night dance parties that don't start till 11:00. I know I'm going to be 45 years old, but this is what we do. And if any one of us had a baby, they would not be able to do those things anywhere near as often, maybe not at all, for a much, much longer time than a couple of months. So if that's something that's really important to you as the child-free person, you need to start working on who are you going to do that with now and how is your relationship with your friend going to change and evolve.

And we have Audrey like a long weekend every month, sometimes a week depending if her dads are traveling or they're really busy with work or whatever. And, you know, we'll get a babysitter if we have plans like or tickets to something or whatever. But mostly when she's with us, you know, we want to be with her and she does get up in the morning and so we don't want to be out until like 5:00 a.m. like we sometimes are. And so we adapt when she's here to having people over.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yes. Exactly.

Devon Clement: You know, they come over more. We actually talked about, you know, if we have a baby, we probably won't move out of the city because it's so much easier to have people come to you.

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Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah. Did you see on the outline also that I wrote about sitcom babies did a real disservice to everybody, to parents and non-parents alike? Because it, you really builds this kind of expectation that adding a baby to a friend group is kind of like a few inconsequential scenes here and there and they'll be eventually whisked away off screen where we're not having to deal with it mentally and emotionally and physically and logistically. But like, that's not true.

Devon Clement: Yeah. Like where was Emma ever? Like, we saw Ross and Rachel together in scenes constantly.

Margaret Mason Tate: Where was Emma? Because we know she wasn't with Judy. Where was Emma?

Devon Clement: Judy, get it together.

Margaret Mason Tate: Look alive, Judy.

Devon Clement: Look alive, Judy.

Margaret Mason Tate: I say, "Look alive, Judy," all the time.

Devon Clement: Yes. How I Met Your Mother, too, like the married couple has the baby and is still in the exact same routine with their friends all the time. Like...

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah, and we never had to see that kid.

Devon Clement: Or how about like the sitcoms of our youth where they would, the parents would have a baby, it would be a baby for one season, and then it would be four.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yes, that's correct. That is exactly correct. It's not like that.

Devon Clement: Which I'll be honest, when they're little, like four months, five months, six months, they are pretty portable. Like you can have a baby. And

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Audrey's a great sleeper, but like we bring her out in the evening and she falls asleep in the stroller and we stay, we stay out. It's fine. But as she gets older, as she's getting older, that's getting harder. You can't have an 11-month-old asleep on your chest in a carrier for the whole night. They're heavy. Like it's a lot.

And as they get to be toddlers. I actually just saw a funny video on Instagram that was like two parents with a little baby like on a boat and they were like, "Your life doesn't have to change when you have a baby." And then it cut to them literally carrying like a crying toddler flopped like a zombie in the dad's arms and they were like, "It does have to change when you have a toddler."

Margaret Mason Tate: It does. It does have to change when you have a toddler. They're a different species. You have to acknowledge that.

Devon Clement: Yeah, so that's another type of trenches when you just can't go anywhere like because of your kid. And that's when you have to get out of your own head about it. Like don't be afraid to leave them with someone.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yes.

Devon Clement: Whether that's their other parent, whether that's your parents, whether that's a babysitter, whether that's another friend that you're asking to babysit. And, you know what?

Pro tip: Start training your child-free friends on your baby. Like from birth or from those early days. I know I've told this story before, but my friend Rachel, single mom by choice, brand new newborn, asked me to babysit when she went to a doctor's appointment. I got exposed to COVID, obviously, not going to babysit. She asked another friend of ours. That friend said, "I have never taken care of a newborn before." And Rachel said, "I hadn't either until two weeks ago. It's fine."

And she just kind of threw all of our friends into the deep end because she needed the help. You know, "Oh, you want to come over and visit? Hold the baby." Like, and we, well, not me, I obviously had a little experience by that point, but like all our friends learned how to take care of a baby because it was

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thrust in our face. If you don't let your friends touch your baby until they're two years old, they're not going to know what to do.

Margaret Mason Tate: Well, there's also, like you know, we talk a lot, we talk so much about parents bonding and stuff and like the smelling and the holding and all of this. I'm not sure if anybody's realized this, that happens with every human being. It's a human being thing. The way that we bond is to carry these sacks of dork around and smell their stupid heads.

Devon Clement: Did you just say sacks of dork?

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah, I felt like that was really my dad coming out of my mouth. But no, genuinely. Do you also, do you know there's no reason that this should be in a podcast, but listener, you're in for a treat. Do you know that my great-grandfather's middle name was Dorkus?

Devon Clement: First of all, I think that's a woman's name, so I'm surprised.

Margaret Mason Tate: It's so weird.

Devon Clement: It's so weird.

Margaret Mason Tate: George Dorkus.

Devon Clement: So we have tell the truth.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah.

Devon Clement: We have get out of the trenches. I'm going to call, oh we've get out of your head.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah.

Devon Clement: And I'm going to say get them into the trenches. Get your friends into the trenches with you.

Margaret Mason Tate: Sure.

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Devon Clement: Whether it's the newborn trenches or the toddler trenches or whatever, get them in there with you. Let your baby be their little bestie because that's cute.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah, that's cute. You guys, that's fine. That's that exactly. That's cute. That's legal. We're into that. And then on the child-free friend side of get people into the trenches, do not allow your child-free friends to do that weird thing where they completely forget what life was like a year ago before they had a kid and they too were freaking out because they couldn't get Eras tickets or they too were freaking out because a guy didn't text them back.

Like that was you a year ago. Don't act brand new. This is my life. This is what I care about. This is what's important to me. This is what's big in my world right now. And I get that you had a kid and that is ethereal and incredible and metaphysical and all this shit, but like he didn't text me back and I need your help.

Devon Clement: Yeah.

Margaret Mason Tate: So get in these trenches with me.

Devon Clement: It's true. It's true. Get in each other's trenches.

Margaret Mason Tate: Exactly, yes. Get in each other's trenches.

Devon Clement: Get in each other's trenches. I love that. I love that because I think... I hate to say this, but I'm going to say it. It's my whole brand. I think sometimes parents think that they are the only people in the world with any concerns or any anything.

Margaret Mason Tate: Absolutely.

Devon Clement: Like no, I can't care about your dating life when my baby is starting solid foods.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yes.

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Devon Clement: Like stop it.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah, stop.

Devon Clement: Stop.

Margaret Mason Tate: Please stop. Because that really is, this is where, you know like, the spoiler, it's not a spoiler anymore. They've waited long enough. Who's who's being the asshole? Both of you.

Devon Clement: It's everybody.

Margaret Mason Tate: It's both of your fault. Everybody is at fault right here.

Devon Clement: It's everybody's fault. Everyone, E-S-H.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah.

Devon Clement: Everyone sucks here. Resentment crops up.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah.

Devon Clement: For both people. The parent feels unseen, judged, and dropped. The child-free friend feels abandoned, deprioritized, what a good word, and frankly, bored.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah, for sure.

Devon Clement: Like I mean, I love nothing better than talking to someone about their baby. If a friend of mine has a baby, I want to hear about it all the time. But I also love when those friends are like, "Please tell me something about the outside world. Please tell me how the concert was. Please tell me about your dating life. I need to talk about something other than poop."

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah. Yeah, I can't repeat this, the information that the pediatrician gave to another person. I've already told my partner. I've already told my mother. I've already told one close friend. I can't, oh my god. Please, let's talk about some other stuff. It is. It's quite, it is terribly boring. I think

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knowing that going into it, knowing that they're going to, it's just like when you bring a new person into a friend group and you're kind of like mildly obsessed with them and you can't stop talking about all the wonderful, cool stuff that they do. And like, "Oh my God, Teresa has a portable watercolor palette. Can you believe it? She just whips it out on the train. Oh my God, like..."

Devon Clement: What?

Margaret Mason Tate: You're just like, and this is like, to you, it's like, okay, cool, Teresa. But I'm like, I don't care. Like, I mean I guess that is as cool to me as it would be if I were scrolling and saw it. Like, okay, fine. I don't care. It's normal. It's normal. Again, along, you know, by about four months, we should be cooling on Teresa and understanding that Teresa, you know, spit up in my hair. So I got beef actually with Teresa now, her watercolor thing is I don't...

Devon Clement: And I think part of it, you know, I'm always, I'm always beating this drum. Getting into a routine, getting into a bedtime routine. If you are nursing, get that baby to take a bottle. Like start at the three, four week mark, get that baby taking a bottle, because I have heard a lot of people tell me, "Oh, our friends can't come out because the baby doesn't take a bottle." The baby is eight weeks old, 12 weeks old, two things, first of all, introduce the bottle much earlier. Second thing, start, even if they won't, like that baby, you could put that baby down for bedtime and they could be sleeping a three or four hour stretch, you know?

So even if you're not going out, if you don't have a babysitter to sit there while your baby is asleep, which you should, whatever, you can have people come over and say, "I'm going to tuck the baby into bed at 7:00. We're going to have a nice dinner. We're going to maybe play a board game, and then you guys can go home and we'll go to sleep." But like you don't have to have a 10-week-old baby hanging off of your boob from 6 to 10 p.m. You just don't.

Margaret Mason Tate: This is real.

Devon Clement: There's lots of options there.

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Margaret Mason Tate: There's shaping, schedule shaping. You know what I mean? It's incremental. We're not saying that this happens overnight, but we are saying that it happens as soon as you're ready and it is a continual process. So as soon as you're ready to get out of those trenches...

Devon Clement: Yeah, that's part of getting out of the trenches.

Margaret Mason Tate: Start getting out. It's not a it's not a one leap, but it is a process that you've got to begin as soon as you're ready and you've got to keep fucking going until you're out.

Devon Clement: So let's talk about some unrealistic expectations.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yes. Let's do that. As a child-free person, I understand that I've really put us in a place with this kickball thing, but like if you just you have to understand that the priorities are going to, those kind of things that make sense. They're just not going to care about certain stuff like they used to. Okay. If you expect them to do that and then they don't do it, you are actually the silly one.

Devon Clement: Yeah.

Margaret Mason Tate: Because your expectation was insane.

Devon Clement: If your friend works in an office near yours and on Thursdays, you go to happy hour after work and now they aren't doing that anymore because they're on parental leave and they're home and they, the baby has a witching hour at 5:00 p.m., you know, you're going to have to figure out another time to see them.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah. Yeah. And I also, I have to say this particular thing before this podcast ends. I need for this to be heard by somebody other than you. It's unrealistic to expect friendships that you haven't forged in the fire of honesty and communication and having hard conversations. If you've never in your life had a hard conversation with a friend and then they have a baby and then they ghost you, like if you're not willing to have a hard conversation, that's

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not actually a level of friend. It's not a tier of friend that you need to be too terribly worried about them dropping off. This is natural in friendships, adult or otherwise. This is ebbing and flowing, natural, dropping off, honestly, very natural.

Devon Clement: Very natural. People move, people do different things.

Margaret Mason Tate: They get, listen, people who are great work friends, they get a different job. You know, it's just not going to be the same. I think that like figuring out, okay, who are my, what are the tiers? Not to be MySpace top 80 about it, but you know what I'm saying? There are tiers of friends.

Devon Clement: My favorite line from The Mindy Project when she says that somebody's her best friend and Danny says, "I thought so-and-so was your best friend." and she said, "Best friend isn't a person, Danny, it's a tier."

Margaret Mason Tate: It took me a really long time to come around to this. I am an only child and I've done a whole lot of time of my life with just one best friend, but I have come around to the fact that it is a tier and it is. And I think that you should kind of figure out who is where. And like, you know, your tier ones, man, those relationships are going to be what you are protecting at all costs, even if you're sleep deprived, even if you're fucking, even if you have spit up on you, like those are going to be what you really, really fight for.

Tier twos are like, okay, I might not be inviting these people into the trenches with me immediately, but I'm going to get them down here in a little bit. Tier three and below, listen, they're like Phoebe, they lift right out. You have to just accept that there are some people who are going to come out of your life and like let that be okay. Because if it is not a friendship that you have had a hard conversation with before, this one's not going to be super easy at all and you don't have a baseline for it.

Devon Clement: You know, but I'll add to that though, I think sometimes your friends might surprise you with who rises up in the tier because you have a baby. Maybe that tier two friend that you don't necessarily have as much of a

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solo friendship with, they're more of like a friend group friend, maybe they have a bunch of nieces and nephews and come over and start being helpful when you have the baby. Like Rachel and I were close before she had the baby. I mean, we were friendly friends before she had the baby, but we got much closer after because she knew that I was cool with hanging out with her with the baby there, that I could watch him, that I could, she could come to me for advice.

And while she was asking me for advice, she'd ask me how I was doing and we'd start talking about my stuff and we've gotten much closer since she had a baby. And I'm sure there's friends in her life that have dropped off more since she had the baby, you know, three and a half years ago. Maybe, you know, I know she's gotten a lot closer with friends who had a baby shortly after and they have kids together and, you know, she's made some new friends through mom groups and stuff like that. So the things are going to shift and change.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah, for sure. I mean, my dad had two really close friends. He was in bands with both of them. Guess who he got closer with when I was little when his, when that guy had a, had a daughter the day before me.

Devon Clement: Exactly, exactly. I mean, my mom said my dad only really agreed to have kids because all his friends started doing it and he was like, "Well, I guess we should too."

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah.

Devon Clement: Yeah.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah.

Devon Clement: So I think there's unrealistic expectations on both sides.

Margaret Mason Tate: For sure.

Devon Clement: And there's also a little bit of entitlement on both sides.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yes.

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Devon Clement: Right?

Margaret Mason Tate: All of my jealousy stems from entitlement.

Devon Clement: Your child-free friends are, feel entitled to your time that's now going to your baby. They feel entitled to your previous routines, your things that you used to do. When are you going to come to happy hour again? When are you going to come to kickball again? "Oh, man, you guys have to go home? We were going to go get a drink after dinner." Like, that's lame, that's boring. Be honest and say, "I miss you. I understand that you need to do this, but I miss you."

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah. It's so, it's so much easier to say, "Ah, don't be lame," than it is to say, "I totally understand and I hate it because I miss you so much." Because it's weird. You know what I mean? We don't do that very much. We're not honest like that a lot of the time.

Devon Clement: And I think putting a little bit of analysis to it and thinking, like if you find yourself feeling resentful because Sadie had a baby and now you don't see her anymore and like "I miss going out dancing with her until 2 in the morning because that was the only time I felt like I could cut loose. She was so, you know, great at like pulling me out onto the dance floor." Like how can you bring that into your relationship?

Or how can you find that with someone else and then focus, like, "I loved when we would be just that right amount of drunk where we would really get honest with each other about our feelings and talk about all this like deep stuff. And now, you know, they're not drinking because they're pregnant or they have a newborn and they just can't, you know, we're not getting to that." Drink during the day. Go out to lunch on a Saturday. Go to brunch. Like whatever it is that you miss about that friendship, figure out a way that you can pull it back in without totally disrupting your whole life and routine with your baby.

But again, get out of your own head. If you're the parent in that situation and you really miss going out dancing late too, have your partner get up with the baby.

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Like say, "Listen, I am going out with Sadie. I'm going to sleep over at her apartment actually, and I will be home tomorrow at 11:00 a.m. and you are on your own for the first wake window." That's great. Do that. A mutual friend of ours got divorced and had small kids and her partner, her ex-husband, you know, moved to a small apartment and so it was easier for him to do his custody with the kids at their previously shared home, at the house, because he didn't have the setup for the kids at his apartment.

She would come to me when he was on his like weekend custody, and we would go out and she would stay over. It was great. It was like a, we had a slumber party. It was like such a fun time for us and such really rekindling of our friendship and reigniting of the things that we previously enjoyed because prior to that, she was like doing family stuff all the time and she never just was like, "I'm going to leave the kids with Ben and we can we can go out or we can do whatever." It wasn't until they got divorced and she was kind of forced to do that.

But like actually, this is going to be an episode we're going to record, like parent like you're divorced, even if you're not. I think there's a lot of, there's a lot of lessons in that are going to be that are going to be really good. So we've yammered on about this for a long time. Let's talk about what people can do. What can you do on both sides of the equation to keep the friendship alive?

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah. What to do, get out of the trenches. Sleep train your baby. Be willing to leave your baby with other people. And have social, you know, if you're the child-free friend, have social support that is going to get you over the hump to where the person can kind of come back to reality, be less goo.

Devon Clement: Yeah. I think expecting, you know, giving each other a lot of grace, expect your child-free friends to not get it and don't get mad at them. Don't penalize them for something that's perfectly logical. They don't know. They haven't done this.

Margaret Mason Tate: They don't know. And you didn't know. This is, I say this all the time. A year ago, you didn't know either, Ruthie.

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Devon Clement: It's true. It's true.

Margaret Mason Tate: Like these people, I feel so bad for the people with these names because we're like going so hard on them. But like, stop, Ruthie. Like a year ago, you also didn't know any of these things and you also were in the exact same position. And a year is not that much time. So like please have some grace for the child-free friends and realize that it is an insane expectation for them to know exactly what you're feeling and exactly what you need and exactly what it's like because it is the craziest... I've done all of the drugs. There's no pride in that necessarily. It's just the truth. I've done all the drugs and never in my life have I been more changed like before and after childbirth. You can't explain it. It's nuts. Don't expect them to get it.

Devon Clement: It is. But tell the truth. Just tell the truth. And honestly, I think even tell the truth if you're like, "Hey, I'm just not going to be available for a while." Maybe put a time limit on it. Maybe say, like "Check back in, you know, we're going through a lot over here. Check back in a month," if that's what you want. Or, "I really miss you. I really want to spend time with you, but I don't know how to ask you to come over here and watch me get spit up on."

There was a video I saw on Instagram recently that made me sad. We were just talking about her, Aiki Comedy, who I love. They do that one rich couple, which is adorable. She recently had a baby, and she made a video with her friend who's a gay guy, and it was basically like him coming over and her like ignoring him and talking to her baby and, you know, saying to the baby like, "Oh, do you want to eat?" And he'd be like, "Oh, yeah, I could eat something." And then she'd go, "You're still here?"

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah.

Devon Clement: Like, that's shitty and rude.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah.

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Devon Clement: I, you know, I'm the opposite. I walk in and I'm like, "Give me that baby." And then, oh, oh, you're still here? Not really. I try, you know, I try not to be that way, but I love visiting a friend when they're like out of the very newborn stage and they are willing to be like, "Here, you hold this. I'm going to go shower." And I'm like, great. Just give me the TV remote. I'll see you in an hour or two because after the shower, you're going to fall asleep. That's fine. Don't ignore your friends. Don't complain to like other parents about how shitty all of your friends are being if you're not being honest with your friends about how you're feeling.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah. Yeah, and if you're such good friends of yours, then maybe be doing some friend tending before any of these issues crop up and have these conversations. I mean, we would love, I personally would love for this podcast to be a catalyst for people to have these discussions preemptively so that they can say like, "I don't want our friendship to be insane after you have a baby. You are a huge part of my life. I do not want that to change in terms of priority. And so let's get ahead of it." If you don't dig super, super deep trenches, then they're easier to get out of.

Devon Clement: Oh, I love that. Yeah, I mean, we love proactivity. We love getting ahead of things. Talk about it. And if you're, you know, having your baby via pregnancy, then your things are going to start changing even before the baby's here. So you're going to be focused on that and talk about it and figure out what are the things that are the most important to you to preserve.

And I think this is a little bit harder, but say you're in a big group chat and they're talking about their plans, they're talking about where they're going, what they're doing. Try not to get too jealous and bratty and be resentful of them for continuing to live their lives as normal when you've had a baby. I had a friend kind of lash out at me a few years ago, not because she had a baby, but because they had moved far away and I was still trying to like get them to come for visits or can I visit you or this or that.

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And she kind of like exploded at me one day and was like, "I feel so guilty when you ask me to do things I can't do and blah, blah, blah." And I was like, okay, I was just trying to help our like still feel included. Like you don't have to say yes. I'm not trying to pressure you into these things. I'm just trying to keep you in the loop. And then once we were honest with each other about that, I was like, okay, I'll wait for you to say you want to hang out or you want to come down or you want me to come up or whatever. I won't keep like pressing on it. And if you need to mute the group chat for a while, mute the group chat or leave. But then come back.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah, group chats that you leave, you can go back to.

Devon Clement: Yeah.

Margaret Mason Tate: I mean, some of them you can't. Some of them are burned with fire. But, you know, but if you haven't burned it with fire, then it's still there. It's fine. Go back. It's not a big deal.

Devon Clement: And again, tell the truth. Just be like, "Hey guys, I don't have the bandwidth. It bums me out seeing how much fun you're all having while I'm here covered in spit up. I love you. I want to see you. Let's talk one-on-one or whatever and I look forward to being back on the dance floor."

Margaret Mason Tate: Conversely, realize that you're going to be up at 2 and 3 in the morning and so are they and they're texting. So all I'm saying is don't, it can be fun because you're, you're up and you can be like, "Oh my God, what are you guys doing?" A lot of me felt very included by my friends because we just didn't stop like, we just didn't really stop texting.

Devon Clement: Yeah, honestly, I mean, it's kind of like working overnights. I'm up all hours, you're up all hours. Let's text each other at 2:00 a.m. Like, why not? "Oh, you met a guy at the bar or you, oh my God, you got drunk and texted your ex. Tell me everything. It is 3:30. I am up and at 'em. Gimme, gimme."

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Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah, I'm not doing anything else. I'm bored. Like let's gab about it. It can be quite fun.

Devon Clement: I like that. And I think we just want people to know that if you're in this season, either as the parent or as the friend, you're not alone.

Margaret Mason Tate: Yeah, for sure. Seasons by definition don't last forever. They just don't.

Devon Clement: Yeah. You're going to get a different season. It'll be hard in different ways. It'll be easy in different ways. And just tell the truth.

Margaret Mason Tate: Tell the truth. Get out of the trenches. Get people into your trenches.

Devon Clement: Get out of your head.

Margaret Mason Tate: Be good to your friends. Get out of your head. Be good to your friends.

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