

Ep #99: The Relationship Habits I Used to Judge



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With Your Host

Devon Clement

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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.

It's time for another episode of *Parenthood Prep*. This is going to be another quickie episode where I tell you about something that if past me saw current me, they would probably judge the shit out of me for. And that thing is thanking my partner for doing basic, expected chores and things around the house or helping me in ways that are pretty standard.

I spent a very long time, and I think rightfully, being incredibly disappointed in the behaviors and helpfulness or lack thereof of most guys. Guys I was dating, guys my friends were dating, guys that were my clients, and just seeing them do the bare minimum and that being tolerated. And I was like, I will never tolerate that. And if your partner, you know, does something for you, like that's just expected. And I think that there's obviously some validity to that. I think a lot of validity to that. A lot of people, especially those who've been socialized as men, are not that helpful and not that useful. And when we reward them for doing the bare minimum, it sort of encourages them to keep doing the bare minimum.

I stopped holding him and myself to this incredibly high standard. You know I stopped having this expectation that he was going to disappoint me and let me down and not do enough and I was going to have to do everything. And if that was not the case, then the alternative was that, you know, he would be just this absolute perfect paragon of like a helper. And a long time ago, not a long time ago, pretty recently actually, I realized that we're all just humans and we're all just trying to do our best and a little bit of encouragement does go a long way.

And it helps that I have a partner who is generally great. You know, is he perfect? Absolutely not. Is he the most helpful, aware of mental load and all that

Ep #99: The Relationship Habits I Used to Judge

kind of stuff? No. But he's trying, and he's learning, and he wants to try, and he wants to be better. And I'm realizing that we're all, you know, we're all just humans with flaws, me included. I know, right? Like that was a big revelation.

Uh, didn't love it. Thanks, Kara Loewentheil. I didn't love it. But here we are, and my life is much better since I have realized that I am a human with flaws. And yeah, so like if he does something pretty basic like take out the garbage or put our dishes in the dishwasher, I thank him because I appreciate that he did that. And it doesn't matter that it's the bare minimum or that maybe he's not doing as much as other people or as much as me, but it makes me happy and it's enough for me. And so, yeah, 2006, or even 2015 me, would be pretty horrified to see me thanking my partner for doing pretty basic chores, but I do it and I love it.

Another one in the vein of things I would have judged myself for however many years ago is that we really do everything together. And especially when we have Audrey with us or we're taking care of the kittens, but mainly like when we have Audrey with us, we do everything together. And I used to be a little eye-rolly of new parents that would like both wake up in the middle of the night for feedings or like both do the diaper change or like not seem to be able to do anything on their own.

And what I've come to realize is that just because you want to do something together with your partner, like do the baby's bedtime together, it doesn't mean that each person is completely incapable of doing it alone. And I would hope that they are capable of doing it on their own because you're not, you're not always able to have that other person there helping you.

But we do stuff together with her because frankly, taking care of a baby can get pretty repetitive and boring. And having someone with you for company that you think is pretty great does make the baby care experience much, much better. We just really like to spend time with her together when we're with her. Now, does that mean that when we have our own child, if we have our own child, we're going to do every single thing together and like never get a break or never give each other a break? Of course not.

Ep #99: The Relationship Habits I Used to Judge

But when he gets home from work, I don't want to just hand her off and be like, okay, it's your turn, like this is my break time. I want to spend time with both of them. And I imagine it will be the same, at least a lot of the time, when we have our own kid. I mean, sure, we'll both you know want breaks and things like that, but we'll also really enjoy doing stuff together.

We don't even really have separate friends. I mean, we have some, but like for the most part, our friend group is just both of ours and we do most of our activities together on the weekends and stuff like that. And there was a time when I would have thought that was like really dumb and gross and lame. And now I don't care if it's really dumb and gross and lame because I like spending time with him, and we have a great time together, and he doesn't suck.

I think when your partner sucks, you want a break from them, but I don't need a break from him because he's great. And I am really happy to tell past me that that is the situation that we are in now because for a long, long time we weren't. And I'm just really grateful. So, this is me being cheesy.

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