Ep #104: Holiday Obligations and Doing What YOU Want to Do



Full Episode Transcript

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.

Devon: I just want to share that I am wearing Alex's DJ headphones because my AirPods refused to connect to my computer. So I am now DJing this podcast.

Margaret: DJ DC on the ones and twos.

Devon: I mean, what is podcasting if not a radio show? Rush Hour Renegades, you know what I mean?

Margaret: Rush Hour Renegades. Wow, we listen, that, we share a brain cell because that is deep in the trenches.

Devon: So deep. So deep. I think about Full House more than is strictly necessary.

Margaret: The amount that is necessary to think about Full House is certainly not zero. It's greater than zero, but I think I'm even above that.

Devon: Next week is Thanksgiving.

Margaret: It is.

Devon: We start the holidays.

Margaret: We do.

Devon: First we should start the podcast, though.

Margaret: Let's do it.

Devon: Welcome back to *Parenthood Prep,* Holiday Edition. Here we have with us once again one of our favorite guests, Margaret Mason Tate. She's basically

the part-time co-host at this point. And we're going to be talking holidays. We're going to be talking Thanksgiving, Christmas, Hanukkah, all these things. I know Diwali just passed. All these things that you have family obligations, you have food obligations, you have gift obligations, you have outfit obligations.

Devon: And, you know, what is sartorial obligation.

Margaret: Sartorial obligation.

Devon: And what does that look like? I have something to say about my mother when we talk about that. What does that look like and how can we make it easier? How can we make it easier and more enjoyable for, let's be honest, the moms.

Margaret: Oh, can we please? And we will address the I got a robe sketch on SNL for sure in this.

Devon: Yeah, I mean I think there's a lot out there that's great. I want to talk about it more. Let's talk about it more because you know what we talk about other people so much? Let's talk about you and what you want. So.

Margaret: Well, and thank you so much for having me on because I'm really looking forward to talking about it on a macro level, a really big level, but also, you know, leaving every listener with an actual tool that they can use on a micro level, on a self level that will be applicable. It's free. It's easy. You don't have to do anything or go anywhere or anything at all for this tool to work. I'm delighted to share it with you.

Devon: I love that. I know what it is and I'm still really stoked to be surprised by it.

Margaret: But first though, you have to, I mean, give me what I came for. I want a little dialogue, honey, about holiday movies that you have seen.

Devon: So, yeah. So I started this off. We were, these headphones are weird. They cover my ears. I just have a new, I have a new little pierce. Oh, did you see my new piercing?

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Margaret: Oh, I love the new stack.

Devon: I have a new little cartilage flat and having a headphone on it is not great, but I'll just be a true DJ and only have one side on.

Margaret: Well, and I'd love to shout out the studio, if you'd like, please.

Devon: Oh, yes, Studio 28 in New York City. They are excellent.

Margaret: Yep, we're going to do a little taggy there for them because we do love them.

Devon: Yes. They did a beautiful job. They did all of my piercings except my little one that my main one that I had at Piercing Pagoda when I was a child and regret. Wish I had gone to Studio 28 even back then. Anyway, so last night, we're watching a holiday movie as is our want this time of year. We love them. And by we, I mean me and Alex. He is often the initiator of watching the holiday movies. We've also started taking notes and making some little videos so they might pop up on the socials in the next few weeks.

Margaret: Now, I do feel like we need, I want to qualify Alex, who is one of my best and closest friends. I love him so much. This is simply so that our incredible listeners are going to get the full picture of who this is. And I do want to clarify that it doesn't seem like this would be the case for Alex initiating all the Christmas movies because his birthday is Christmas Eve and he's Jewish.

Devon: He's half Jewish, to be fair. He did celebrate Christmas growing up. Yeah, his birthday is Christmas Eve. You would think he would be real mad about it.

Margaret: Such a grinch.

Devon: He loves it. So, yes, his birthday is Christmas Eve and he and he loves the holiday movies. And something cute that he said last night was, even though these movies all start out tedious, more often than not, they land the plane. And it's really true. You're rooting for them in the end, those crazy kids. So anyway,

the movie we watched last night was called A Christmas Castle Proposal, A Royal in Paradise 2.

Margaret: The two is really.

Devon: It's just pull the words out of the hat for the title.

Margaret: Right.

Devon: But here's the thing. So we watched A Royal in Paradise, the original, which was actually not a Christmas movie. We came to find out it was just a movie. It's on Netflix. Anyway, this bestselling romance author, I could spend this whole episode just recapping this, but I'm not going to. Bestselling romance author has writer's block, goes away on vacation, meets a guy, does not know he is the Prince of Torovia.

Margaret: And I got to tell you, if I had a dollar for every time this happened to me.

Devon: It's not something that's been covered much in the holiday movie genre.

Margaret: No, this is fresh. As I mentioned, this is what a fresh material.

Devon: Fresh concept. So anyway, so in the first one, she meets the prince. Hijinks ensue, they fall in love. In the second one, which does take place at Christmas time, she goes to Torovia to the castle to spend Christmas with his family. And she brings her parents. Her parents come also. And they're very homey people. The mom has a New York accent and the dad has a southern accent. So I don't really know where they're supposed to be from. They bring the family Christmas decorations, which frankly are nicer than the dollar store decorations that the castle of Torovia is decorated with, but not the point. Anyway.

Margaret: And there's some commentary there, but we won't get into it. Anyway.

Devon: And there's this push pull, this back and forth between the queen, prince's mother, who by the way, spoiler alert, fast forward a little bit if you're

planning to watch A Royal in Paradise, hooks up with her Butler at the end. And the son is like, you've been in love with your Butler this entire time. The king is dead. He's like, you've been in love with your Butler this entire time. So why are you giving me a hard time for being in love with a commoner? So anyway, so the Prince of Torovia, the Queen of Torovia, they're having this huge Christmas banquet at which the prince's girlfriend is going to be expected to play an official role, which she finds out two days before Christmas, at which time they start fitting her for a dress and teaching her the names of the important royals that will be in attendance.

Now, meanwhile, her mother wants to do the traditional wreath making that we do every year and the hot coco and decorate the tree. And there's one tree in the castle that is undecorated in the middle of the living room, that the mother's like, oh, they left this tree for me to decorate. That's so nice. Stay tuned for that to come up later.

And basically the whole movie, both the Prince and Olivia, the author, are dealing with this push and pull between her family wanting to do these fun Christmas traditions and his family wanting her to do these official state responsibilities that she just found out about yesterday and the banquet is in three days. This is not how anything works. She's also getting measured for her custom gown two days before the banquet. And it just, it was such a commentary on the push and pull not only of, oh, and she has her book manuscript due for the eagerly awaited sequel to the book that she wrote called A Royal in Paradise.

Margaret: And listen, and do we take the time to say, is this also commentary on scheduling and how we screw ourselves over? We can talk about it and we will.

Devon: Frankly, it's true. So she's trying to make her parents happy. She's trying to make the Queen happy. She spends a lot of time trying to remember the name of one of the royal family members, the Duchess of something. Her name is Ashley and she cannot remember the name Ashley.

Margaret: Not Princess Jessica.

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Devon: There's a montage of the different activities and it keeps cutting back to her trying to remember the name Ashley. So anyway, then at the end they have the banquet. It's in their house dining room and there's 12 people there. I'm like, why were we so stressed out about this?

Margaret: If you can have, if you can have 12 place settings and have everybody be fed, that's not a banquet.

Devon: I think that's also a commentary. You're spending all this time working so hard to remember the name Ashley and then for what purpose? What actually was this at the end of the day?

Margaret: You're going to have place cards anyway. It's a banquet.

Devon: It's a banquet. And there wasn't an official introduction where they bring them up to you. And listen, I've watched a lot of shit about royalty. You have someone whispering the names to you.

Margaret: That is correct. You absolutely do.

Devon: So that you don't embarrass everybody.

Margaret: Because it's not just embarrassing for you. It's embarrassing for the people who are receiving that. It's embarrassing for Ashley, frankly.

Devon: That's what I'm saying. And we're not here to embarrass Ashley.

Margaret: Or Jessica.

Devon: Or Jessica. So it just got me thinking, what are the holiday traditions? Because then you've also got your Four Christmases, you know, where Reese Witherspoon and Vince Vaughn decide to just fuck right off and go on vacation and tell everybody that they're doing things with the other family members and then they get stuck seeing everybody's family members.

Margaret: No, no, no. They tell them all they're volunteering.

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Devon: Oh, right, right, right, right, right. Okay, yes. They tell them they're volunteering. They're going on vacation. They're telling everybody to fuck right off. Where is the balance between driving yourself absolutely insane trying to meet everyone else's obligations and remember the name Ashley versus fucking right off and not seeing anybody or being around anybody? Now, I know this is rich coming from me because Alex and I actually are fucking right off for Thanksgiving.

Margaret: You really are.

Devon: It's not because the holidays are stressful or whatever. It's because we've had an opportunity to take a vacation with our friends and one of them is a teacher and the only time they could go was Thanksgiving. And honestly, between his cousin's wedding and our wedding, we've spent a lot of time with his extended family and we felt that we didn't have to do a big Thanksgiving this year.

Margaret: And we're going to go for Christmas to your family. I'm very close to my family. I see my family all the time.

Devon: Right.

Margaret: And they work in health care and I talk about this all the time. We often do not do things on the holiday. We actually have a lovely plan to go out to dinner with my family on December 17th. We don't do a Thanksgiving thing. My mom and I will sometimes go out to a restaurant, but we generally spend Thanksgiving with Alex's family. Anyway, what I'm saying is where is that balance between the royal obligations, the family obligations, the work obligations, going insane, and fucking right off and telling everyone to enjoy their Christmas and Thanksgiving and Diwali and Hanukkah and whatever else because I know Diwali's passed, but I'm just saying things where you have a lot of family obligations, things that are happening. Where is that balance and how do you find it? And I think the real question is, is it the same for everyone?

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Devon: Of course it's not the same for everyone. It couldn't possibly be the same for everyone because not everybody, first of all, not everybody has the same amount of parents. Let's just start there.

Margaret: No, genuinely. I mean, whether or not you have to travel, whether or not you have two sides of a family, a partner, their family, and maybe they have multiple. For instance, if I'm married to Steve, I would never marry a man named Steve.

Devon: What about Sleeve?

Margaret: Who man, whose name's Sleeve?

Devon: No one's, okay, no one is named Sleeve.

Margaret: No one is named Sleeve. Yeah, but if I'm, if I'm married to Sleeve and he has a mom and a dad, they're divorced, and we have two, I mean, it's literally a four Christmases kind of situation.

Devon: Yeah. So for some people, so no.

Margaret: I mean, I have, if I was trying to see everyone in my family, it'd be my mother and her side. My mom's local, her side's out in Pennsylvania. My father is in Virginia, but all my cousins on his side are in North Jersey and Florida. Family members that we're closest to, North Jersey and Florida. Alex has family in Chicago and California. And then his dad, fortunately, his dad doesn't have much extended family that we see because he has no cousins on that side or anything because that would just be one more thing we, we had to do.

Devon: Absolutely. But I think that the questions that you ask yourself to arrive at that place of balance, I think are probably the same regardless of the scenario. And the one that I probably would start with and start with my clients is what are your favorite holiday things? What? I like to ask them, tell me when you think of the holidays and I think about holiday spirit, what does that mean to you? What does that look like? Smell like, feel like? And I write all of it down and just kind of scribble, scribble, scribble, scribble, scribble, everything that they're saying because sometimes they're saying things like traditions. Sometimes they're

saying things like foods. Sometimes they're saying things like particular pieces of decor, etc.

Margaret: Don't forget the sartorial obligations.

Devon: Do you love the matching Christmas pajamas? Do you love getting dressed up in an outfit?

Margaret: And maybe do you love dressing your kids up in outfits?

Devon: Christmas cards, the tree. I mean, all of these things. And maybe it is seeing your parents. Maybe it is the drive. I mean, some people, there are freaks of nature in this world. Tell me in the comments if you are one of these freaks who like putting their kids in the car and driving five plus hours. They like the driving, they like the trip, they enjoy it. They thoroughly and deeply enjoy this. And so they'll say that. They'll say the, you know, listening to Christmas carols in the car.

One of my very favorite things ever that happened at the holidays. I grew up in a dinner theater and a comedy theater and the comedy theater would rent a bus and all the adults would have coolers and all the kids would come and we would go and we would ride the bus around looking at holiday lights all over the county. And everybody was safe and everybody was warm and we would do some things where we would get out. It was beautiful. It was such a fun thing to do. So they would sing the Christmas carols on the bus mic, the little charter bus mic. And there were probably people who hated that.

Margaret: Yes, yes. There were people who did not enjoy it, did not want to come, did not come, not a thing. But probably people who hated it and did come because their partner made them or they felt obligated to their friends at the comedy theater and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. So I think getting really granular with it because we talk about this with life, we talk about this in our course, finding time, we talk about this just in general is advice on how to change things is not going to hit, is not going to work, is not going to be effective, is not going to do anything if you don't actually know what you want to change, what you want to keep, what you want to get rid of. So figuring that out.

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Devon: You figure that out, you get that list down, you get you get the things. And then you'll start to notice in that list, step two, question two is what of this is portable? Because if a lot of your stuff, for instance, if your favorite thing is the stockings and you don't want to not be at your house because you want to have your Christmas stockings, you can take your Christmas stockings to your in-laws and say, we'll use our own stockings, thank you. That little tiny shift makes you feel like you're engaging your traditions. I mean, you are, it's not that make you feel that way, it's objectively is doing that. You're incorporating your own preferences and desires into this collaborative collective holiday celebration where maybe you do go to a different place one year or two years out of the five and when you do that, so that you're not disoriented or feeling like you're being slighted, you take the stockings. Now, some of them are not portable.

Margaret: Pink Christmas tree.

Devon: Yeah. You know, you can't, we could get a tiny one, but she's in the house. If what you love the most in the world is having your kids come wake you up and say that Santa has come, and very specifically in your own bed with your own stuff and all of that, then that is not a portable tradition and we're going to have to figure out, okay, so the balance is going to tip of your stay home Christmas Eve, but maybe you're out during the day on Christmas or you're out during the day on Christmas Eve.

Margaret: Or maybe you're going out for dinner on Christmas Eve, but then sleeping home and waking up in the morning. I mean, there's so many different ways you can navigate that. When we were kids and even, as we got older, but even when we were little, going out for a dressy Christmas Eve dinner and then midnight mass was a huge thing for my mother. It was huge. And I complained about having to wear tights and having to wear a turtleneck and whatever else and, but I did it. And I talked about a story that I that I wanted to tell and then I remember one year I was, I don't know, 10 or 11, I was griping about getting dressed up and having to wear these itchy clothes and whatever else. I should have talked about that in the baby clothes episode, but I have sensitive skin and my mom tried to put me in itchy shit all the time and I, neither one of us realized that was the problem because she's like, I never even realized clothes could be

so soft until you started shopping for yourself. Also, I think things just, you know, changed over time, whatever.

Devon: A lot of acrylic back in the day.

Margaret: But anyway, I got upset and I was like, who are we going to even, who's even going to see us? The president? And she said, no. She said, I'm going to see you. I want this.

Devon: Ah, so then everything she says.

Margaret: That was like, oh. There was also another time when my grandmother was with us and she, I think her suggestion instead of going out to dinner was to get a bucket of chicken. And I love to go out to dinner, but there is nothing in the world that I love more than a fucking bucket of chicken.

Devon: Chicken from a bucket over the bucket.

Margaret: Yeah. I latched on to the bucket of chicken idea just because I so desperately wanted a bucket of chicken. We did not get buckets of chicken very often when we were with my grandma we did. But you know, and my mom was freaked out, like, I'm trying to have this nice thing that I want to do and you're complaining about your clothes and she wants to get a bucket of chicken and like, this is what I want. But to us, it was just an obligation. And when she actually said, like, this is what's important to me. This is what I want. And the subtext of that, which I really want people to believe and enforce in their own families is, this is what I want and what I want is important too. Because you have a want for these people.

And then what she didn't want was what we ended up doing, which was getting all dressed up the next day to go to after opening presents, going to my aunt and uncle's. She's like, you should be in your pajamas all day on Christmas. But that was the obligation. So you got to figure out what you want, what's important to you and you have to convey that to people. Because I think what happens sometimes is everyone has all these obligations. Your kids, your partner, and everybody's fed up with the obligations and then they have a fit about the itchy

tights that you're making them wear and they don't know that this is the thing that is the most important to you.

Devon: Can I please give you a tiny tip on how to not make it weird and contentious when you are saying, this is what I want and what I want matters? Because it can, I mean, you're simply, listen, my job is to help you get what you want. My job is to help you get what you want. And some of the way that you need to do that is to understand the best way to do it. The quickest point between A and B is absolutely not to have a meltdown about why, damn it, you guys never respect me and I never get. That is valid and legit and I have absolutely had that meltdown.

I'm not saying I'm above it. What I am saying is that again, my job is to help you get what you want and the best way that you can get what you want is to make it so that they're so silly that they would think anything else. You go, well, of course, because I'm a member of the family, so of course I get a turn. What do you mean? Like, that's crazy that you, you make it silly. Not sarcastic, silly. I mean, I really mean you make it like, that's so silly. Of course I get a turn. I'm part of this family.

Margaret: Of course I get stuff in my stocking. I'm part of the family.

Devon: You know.

Margaret: And to the point where when you're doing that all the time,

Devon: Exactly.

Margaret: Everybody thinks it's silly. And frankly, I mean, we could go down a whole rabbit hole with this, but it starts with the other adults in the situation. It doesn't start with the kids.

Devon: That's exactly correct. And so when you're saying that's so silly, everybody gets to be silly. But also I just want to say that like,

Margaret: That's so silly. Why would I get all the Christmas presents for your family? That's silly. That's silly. That's not, she's not my mother.

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Devon: That's the silliest thing. Why would I stuff my stocking? That's so silly. And again, you're not being ugly. Like you're genuinely treating this like it's absurd because hey, it is absurd. And even if you participate in thinking that you don't deserve a turn, you're being absurd.

Margaret: Can we just pull this out and just make a note that we need to do a whole episode about this? Because I have so many things that I'm thinking right now that are not related to the holidays or the topic at hand because I think this is so important. Just quickly reminded me of something that I say, which is your kid has a stuffed animal or blanket or something that they love and you don't want it to get lost. You don't want them to drag it out of the house and lose it or dirty it or whatever. That stuffed animal lives in the bed, lives in the crib. And if they want to bring, you know, Lamy or whatever, if they want to bring Lamy out of the room, it's like they asked you to bring their crib downstairs. What? That's the silliest thing I've ever. What do you mean? Lamy does not leave the crib. Lamy lives in the crib. Lamy can't come downstairs. Lamy can't come to school. Lamy can't come to the mall with us. What are you, what are you actually talking about, you lunatic?

Devon: Listen to yourself. Get a grip. Listen to yourself. My friend, one of our best friends, Courtney, tells her kids to get a grip with great frequency and it tickles me every time. It's so funny.

Margaret: I love that. I love that. Get a grip.

Devon: Because it's not mean, but it is like, you know, come on, you're better than this.

Margaret: My sister and I still laugh at our cousin saying to her toddler, one year old, falling over, not maybe a little older, but falling over himself while walking because he kept tripping over stuff and she goes, are you for real? Are you for real?

Devon: Look where you're walking.

Margaret: Oh my god. Hilarious.

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Devon: So yeah. So act like it would be just absurd. And the more that you do that, the more that they are going to hear in their heads, well, of course my sister should have a turn. She's part of this family. Of course dad gets a turn. He's part of this. They're going to start to internalize that. They're going to start to recognize that everybody needs to be in concert with each other. Everybody's needs get met. Sometimes, if somebody has a broken leg, their needs are going to be accommodated on the family vacation because guess what? Nobody wants to have a broken leg. This sucks. Yes, so maybe we're going to go see on the rainy day at the vacation, we're going to go see the movie they want to see because this sucks for them. But that doesn't mean that they get to choose every movie forever because they had the broken leg one time. Other people are going to have stuff that they, anyway.

Margaret: And I think you need to also have that conversation with the partner, with the parents, with the in-laws, whoever, about like, what are your priorities? I love gift giving. I love thinking of gifts. I love wrapping gifts beautifully. I am happy to be in charge of all the gift giving for all the family members because that is something that is joyful to me, but because I am doing that, you are making all the food for the party that we're hosting. You are making all the plans. If there's something that you want off your plate or on your plate, talk about that. What's on whose plate?

Devon: We have told this story a hundred times and it's a brief anecdote, I swear. But Devon, for several years, spent Christmas with me. This is pre-Alex, as a partner, which feels like how was that ever even a time in our lives. I feel like I was born knowing Alex.

Margaret: I know.

Devon: Which is insane because I'm older than Alex, to be really clear.

Margaret: But we've told this, Devon used to spend Christmas with me and I hosted a very large, very elaborate Christmas party for several years when I was married and had a very different family configuration. And it was big. It was 25, 25 or 30 people.

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Devon: I came to people. It's cute that you think that's big.

Margaret: It was big for us.

Devon: Mine is 60 in a Manhattan apartment.

Margaret: I, it's true. I made all of the food and I got all the, everybody, everybody who came got a gift. It was a it was a whole thing. And I loved it. I love doing it. But I kind of had my kitchen situation down to a science. And Devon came in and was like, I can't do a lot of things, but what I can do is task completion with things like folding napkins, putting little M&M eyes on my reindeer.

Devon: Give me a tedious task that's going to take a while and I will sit there and I will do it. I will wrap, we made what like a Christmas tree of cheese balls or something.

Margaret: I was talking about that this morning.

Devon: Yes, pieces of cheese in dough and set them so that you can.

Margaret: You put the M&M eyes on my reindeer cupcakes. Guys, it was, I swear to God. You know what we really should do is we should post my menu for ideas. That would be so good. We should do that. I should write that down actually.

Devon: Yes. I need it too for my holiday party.

Margaret: But so I did all the stuff, but I couldn't really conceptualize help until Devon came and was like, give me the process oriented stuff and I will knock it out because that stuff makes me want to die. I hate that. But Devon, and I said, ah, you're my finest foot soldier. And it has become part of our lexicon so much. Our friend Kara is a foot soldier. She and I love.

Devon: Now when I'm, I'm running my own party, I don't want to be putting the eyes on the reindeer because I have to be figuring out where the punch bowl's going to go. I have to be getting myself ready. I have to be moving the jigsaw

puzzle out of the, all these little tasks that I can't just tell someone, get the room ready. I need to be the one looking, figuring whatever. So, yeah, if you're going to make the punch, if you're going to make the cheese balls, last year, my friend Julia came and she peeled all the eggs for the deviled eggs. It was glorious.

Margaret: Oh, that's brilliant.

Devon: And we chit chatted the whole time and it was so good and she does have some physical health things she was recovering from. So a task where she can just sit on the couch and peel eggs for an hour. It's perfect.

Margaret: Incredible. Yes. Perfect.

Devon: So who are your foot soldiers? You know who are your foot soldiers? Also, your children. Give them some shit to do.

Margaret: Oh my God, please. Treat these children like foot soldiers.

Devon: Who loves to put eyes on reindeer, M&M eyes on reindeer more than an 8-year-old?

Margaret: True. It's true.

Devon: So, we want you to figure out what is your priority, what of those things are portable, what can you incorporate anywhere in the world, or what do you really need to do at home. And the last thing that we want you to know is if you travel somewhere else and they have an itinerary of nine things and you're only into three things, I promise you that the three things are okay. When you go to wherever you're going and you're like, I don't want to do that because they'll want us to do X and Y and Z and P and D and Q, you don't have to do all of those. You really don't. You really can.

Margaret: And you can choose your favorites and you can also ask the other people what's the most important to them. If you do six things with your in-laws and you like one of those things and your partner likes one of those things and there's four other things, you ask your in-laws which of those four things are the most important to them that you do and then you do that thing.

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Devon: And again, and the other three, nobody has liked for years and you just ditch them.

Margaret: We're kind of hoping that they peter out, frankly. War of attrition on these weird traditions. War of attrition on these weird, weird traditions. I love it. But the way that you're going to get what you want there, okay, again, this is my whole thing. I'm trying to get you what you want. The way that you pitch it is, so I want to be my best self. It's been a whole year. Oh my god, for you too. I'm sure. So I want to make sure that we are all happy, healthy, the best possible us that we can be at these celebrations. And I'm telling you now, if we go to everything, we are going to be such pills.

And I don't want to be, but oh my god, how do I do it? And listen, this language is very pandering. You're going to have to switch it up for who your people are. You know that better than me. But you do know my angle here. You can sense what I'm getting at. So you're pitching it as this is best for you so that we are fresh as daisies and are having a blast for the holidays. And we're so happy that we're here. We would never not want to come. We just can't do all the things. So I want to make sure that I know what your most important thing is so that we're doing that.

Devon: Also, if you want me to do the beautifully wrapped gifts under the tree display that I do every year that I love to do, but I can't do that if I'm riding around on a bus with your weird comedy friends. I personally would love to do that. I would love to do both of those things. But why don't you go on the bus with your comedy friends and I'll stay home and wrap the gifts in peace and quiet with my Christmas music playing and my Christmas lights on and a glass of wine. And nobody's mad and you come home from the thing and you tell us about the lights you saw and you took the kids with you.

Margaret: And God bless.

Devon: And I got to sit and wrap gifts and it was, oh my god, when I was young, I had a vision. I'd be wrapping my gifts for my family and I just had this vision of myself as a cool adult with the lights of the Christmas tree and Christmas music

playing and wrapping my gifts with a glass of wine. And that was my vision. That's one of my favorite things about the holidays is doing that.

Margaret: You get your whole, yes, your dream and you have achieved your dream. I think that's beautiful. Well, for everything that we can't fix through this kind of framework, these questions that we've just mentioned, I have a tool that I want to give everybody. It is the emotional freedom technique. It's people call it tapping because it's a much cooler thing to say than emotional freedom technique. Emotional freedom technique sounds so LinkedIn. I hate it.

Devon: It does. I don't even like telling people that I do it in coaching because they're going to be like, oh, you're one of those. I swear I'm not. This is all grounded in neuroscience. These are tapping scripts. You literally use two fingers to tap different places on your body as you're saying aloud, affirming statements essentially. And I have 10 examples for five different types of person, which I think is really cute.

So for instance, if you feel like you're an invisible mom or a mother or caregiver who feels unappreciated, depleted, and guilty for wanting more, a couple of the example of the scripts are, even though I feel like no one sees how hard I'm working, I love and accept myself. Even though I feel guilty for needing space, I love and accept myself. So it's like that, you know, scripts for radical self-permission for anxious overthinkers, for the overfunctioner. Where does the overfunctioner thrive more than in the holidays? Not. It is, it's a nightmare.

Anyway, you can click in the show notes or in the blog post that is linked. You can click there to get that PDF. We would love to give it to you. And it also has a video of how to perform the tapping. You get a little link there. I'll teach it. It's quite literally five minutes. But I learned this technique in 2010. It was 16 years ago and I've been using it consistently for 16 years. I use it for myself. I use it with my clients. I really think that it works. So I wanted to make sure that you had it as we go into the holidays because I think that it can help a lot. It's also something that you can teach your kids.

Margaret: I love that. I love that. Because sometimes even when we get all the practical advice in the world, it can be hard to break through that mental block of

this is what I'm supposed to do. I have to make Christmas magical for my family. I have to heal the wounds of my own childhood with my children. I have to all that stuff. But really what it comes down to is get on board, do the tapping.

Devon: Love and accept yourself.

Margaret: Figure out what you want, realize that you are allowed to have a turn and that's important.

Devon: Yeah, take your turn. And figure out what everybody else actually wants because maybe making the Christmas ham, maybe nobody even likes ham. Maybe you're just doing it because the only guy who liked it has actually passed away and you're just doing it to do it.

Margaret: You know. And everybody thinks everybody else wants the ham and nobody wants the ham.

Devon: I think there's that realization about turkey. You know what we're doing for before we go. You know what we're doing, my partner and I are doing Thanksgiving just us. Oh, delicious. No kids, no family, no anybody. It's just us. And we are making duck l'orange.

Margaret: Ooh, I love that.

Devon: Yeah, cuz nobody likes turkey. What are we doing?

Margaret: My uncle in Virginia, he's the only person I've ever really liked the turkey of. I don't know what his secret is. I should find out, but he's kind of a weirdo.

Devon: I think it's probably being Virginian, right? I think that there's a lot of that.

Margaret: No, he's not Virginian. He's from New Jersey. He worked in DC for years. He lives down there, but no, he's from New Jersey, so there's no real.

Devon: Not a real turkey making tradition here.

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Margaret: But anyway, yes, I just want to throw in a metaphor. Spatchcocking a turkey where you cut it open and you splay it out. I kind of want you to do that with your with your holiday plans. Cut them open, splay them out, see which ones you want.

Devon: Yeah, and then you get crispier skin and a juicier bird. It's everybody wins when you do this. There's more clarity. You'll never go back. And people say, once you spatch cock a turkey, you never go back. Now, do you want to mention to your incredible listeners that we're not going to be around much for December because guess what? That's one of the things that we love is that we say, December, we got stuff going on. We can't record.

Margaret: We got stuff going on. And you know what? We know you do too and you don't maybe have as much time to listen. Maybe you forgot about all the great holiday episodes we had last year and we're going to we're going to run those back.

Devon: If we didn't want to replay those holiday episodes, we should not have made great holiday episodes because they're really good.

Margaret: They're really good. I mean, we were like, what should we talk about? Gift ideas? Oh no, we already have a great episode about that. We don't need to do that again. So you're going to hear some reruns in December and then we have some really cool exciting stuff planned for January that is already, dare we say, ready, locked and loaded.

Devon: Locked and loaded. We're so excited to see you in the new year, but we would also still love to hear from you. Where are you going? Tell us everything. If you want a personalized EFT script, you can DM @happyfamilyafter on Instagram and just tell me because I'm in that inbox, baby. That's me. So you come on over and you say, I need some scripts. This is my situation. I'll get them right to you, personalized.

Margaret: Or you want to coach and hash out what you want to do for the holidays, what you want to get rid of. My husband insists I go on this comedy bus thing that I don't want to do because it's all just his dumb friends laughing at

their own jokes while I'm trying to enjoy the goddamn Christmas lights. It is a lot. It's a lot of nativity jokes. It's a lot. Yeah, yeah, also, you can get your coaching by contacting me on Instagram @MargaretMasonTate. We'll talk about when my mother would chaperone field trips, she would not go on the bus. She would get special permission to follow in her car.

Devon: That's brilliant.

Margaret: Well, it's partly because she does have anxiety about being driven. She doesn't like buses, trains, planes, any of that. But mostly I think it was so that she could smoke.

Devon: I thought I was going to say, is it, I thought it was because of the cigarettes.

Margaret: I think it was mainly the cigarettes, but also the anxiety. Yeah, I don't know how my mom got through the work day. She. Teachers, well, they would just go outside and smoke. We'd see them out the cafeteria window.

Devon: Oh.

Margaret: I can't even imagine. She's in a middle school. It was illegal.

Devon: To smoke on the grounds?

Margaret: Not always, though. Only in her later decades. I'm talking about when I was a kid, 30 years ago.

Devon: Oh no. No, no, no. Right. The teachers would all be right outside the door smoking.

Margaret: I am talking about my elementary school.

Devon: Yeah, Greenville High had a smoking section.

Margaret: My Latin teacher would put the chalk in her mouth like a cigarette.

Devon: That will haunt my dreams.

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Margaret: All right, on that note, happy holidays.

Devon: Happy holidays. We think you're great here.

Margaret: And we hope that you have a wonderful, wonderful holiday season. We love you. To be sure you never miss an episode, be sure to follow in your favorite podcast app. We'd also love to connect with you on social media. You can find us on Instagram @happyfamilyafter or at our website, happyfamilyafter.com. On our website, you can also leave us a voicemail with any questions or thoughts you might have and you can roast your baby. Talk to you soon.

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