Episode 6: Taking a break from parenting and striving to just be adequate with podcast host and parenting coach Torie Henderson

**Torie:** My name is Tori Henderson and I have two perfectly imperfect teenagers. Actually, one is an adult now, I guess a young adult and I work as a life coach for parents. My website is life coaching for parents.com, but I primarily focus on moms who try really hard to do everything well and they get burned out, resentful, exhausted through the process of trying to do everything so well. So those are my people, and I've been doing this coaching for the last gosh, over 10 years now I also have a podcast called 'Supermom is getting tired'.

**Jacqueline:** And that's how I found Tori through her podcast. And actually at the start of COVID I sent Tori a message saying we're going into lockdown possibly for the next few weeks. How am I going to cope? I had no idea at that point that it would be a year and a half later. And Torie showed me so much compassion and highlighted to me that what I was dreading was how I was going to treat myself. And that was really a start of the journey for me with Tori. So I was really grateful for that. So go ahead, Tori, describe your journey to where you are now and how you've coped as a working mom.

**Torie:** Yeah before I became a mom, I would say I was an excellent parent before I became one. Like I knew everything and I was going to do everything perfectly because I was a teacher I'd worked with kids. My whole career was always around with children and I love them. And I was quite judgmental of other parents who I didn't think were doing it right. So when I became a mom, it really pulled the rug out from under me because I had this idea that if I do everything right, then cause and effect. And I think so many of us who've been through therapy somehow it turns out like, cause that it's mom's fault or at least that's what I picked up. If my mom had just done A, B and C differently than I wouldn't have suffered emotionally well, so I'm go into parenting thinking I'm just going to do everything right now. I know what to do. And so my child will never have to suffer a day. That did not pan out for very long because I got a kid who was very hard to please from the moment he came out of the womb, he was a blue baby and he was colicky and just cried all the time. So I thought there was this cause and effect, like if I do everything right, my kid would be happy and right from out of the gates that wasn't working, because he was unhappy, no matter what I did.

And so I had to learn to find other means of knowing what I was, if I was doing it right. And so I started devouring, parenting books and just reading like crazy. Trying to figure out, finding some sort of external authority to tell me I was doing a good job. And but the more books I read, the more kind of overwhelmed I got, perfectionistic I got. I just started to feel worse about myself. No matter what, cause the books would contradict each other. And so I felt like I was never good enough. Still looking for some sort of external validation that I was on the right path. And so I started teaching parent education classes because I'd been reading all these parenting books.

I'm like. Okay. If they want to know, I'll just read the book and then tell them what the book says. Apparently, people wanted me to do that. I just would say here, read the book yourself, but some people don't want to read books. So I'm like, okay, I'll just tell you what this book says. And I thought maybe this will make me a better mom. Cause like I can really espouse and integrate it because you'd read a book about how bad media is for the child's developing brain and you'd be, I'd be really good a week or two, like reducing my child's screen time. And then two weeks later I would slip back into old habits, and so I thought if I'm teaching. Then maybe it'll help me be the perfect mom.

**Jacqueline:** And they do say, learn one, do one, teach one means that you've understood it and you've got it right.

**Torie:** And I acquired a whole lot of knowledge, but it didn't help me feel better. After a few years of just doing parent education and just trying really hard, I was exhausted.

I was full on, burned out. I was always trying to find the perfect work-life balance, like working part time, part-time at home, but it didn't matter if I was home full time. If I was working full-time I was part-time in both. I was exhausted constantly, just that hamster wheel. And I think it was so much around not feeling like I was good enough, doing enough.

I would be doing the dishes and try to clean up the kitchen and then, oh shoot. I gotta send that email. I never responded and I'd go to my computer and I fall down that rabbit hole. Oh no, I've got to, the kids are hungry. I got to go eat. I got to get dinner ready. And it was like, I would just hop from thing to thing. I'd fold one shirt and then put one glass in the dishwasher. Send one email and I was just constantly moving, never feeling accomplished, never feeling productive, never feeling satisfied and just going to bed every night, feeling inadequate. And it was just exhausting.

And I also had this idea in my manual of how to be a good mother. It was self-sacrifice and never take time for yourself. Don't prioritize your own needs. Put the children and the cleanliness of the home before by own like physical, mental, emotional wellbeing. That was definitely in my little manual on how to be a good mom. And so I suffered the consequences of that. And so when I found life coaching, that's when things started to change for me.

**Jacqueline:** And you mentioned even though, in theory, the workload changed. If you go from full-time to part-time work, you'd think the workload changed. And I know I did the same. I went from full-time to part-time, but I was still exhausted and stressed. And I think what's important for burnout is that people understand for workplace burnout, the workload has to change, but as you and I have demonstrated, even when you change that workload by choosing to go part time, if you have these perfectionist tendencies, then you're still going to be dissatisfied, whatever you do, however much your workload is, you make other things to fill that workload.

**Torie:** I believe we need to accept that in modern day America, because other countries are way better than this, but in modern day America, I would say it is that now just a fact that we have too much to do and not enough time to do it. And I think once I can get my clients to accept that as just a circumstance of life of being a mom in America's it doesn't matter like I coach full-time stay at home moms. They still have too much to do. But not enough time, because we are inundated with oh I guess I could teach my children how to cook. There's always ways you could be better. You could always have a cleaner home.

You could always eat healthier. You could always expose your kids to nature more there's always more. So if we can just accept the reality that there's always going to be more to do than time to do it. And then focus on how you want to feel about that circumstance. Because so many of us get caught up in the trap, of oh no I've got so much to do.

I need to start working. I need to get something done. I need to focus on accomplishment. I don't knock that, but it's, there's no end because when you become a mom, the tasks are so circular. As soon as the kitchen is clean it is getting dirty again. And so you don't get this finished line. Where when you're in school. Yeah. You can buckle down focus. Okay. I got to work hard. I got to get it done and then there's finals. And then you get a break. And so we get trained to think that if I just focus, buckle down, work hard nose to the grindstone, get it done, then there's a reprieve after that, when you become a mom, there's no reprieve.

**Jacqueline:** And I think too, just since you mentioned that educational experience that we go through, have been reading about how women within schools can learn how to perform by knuckling down and getting a product to a teacher that gets graded and makes them feel good. And that's not what the work world looks like at all. The work world has so many different elements that you have to incorporate. You have to work in teams. You don't just get this grade that makes you feel good so that you can continue. And that can be very difficult for A grade students to actually change. Cause they often say that A grade students don't necessarily become a great employee.

So yeah, it's interesting. So let's talk a little more about your working mum, clients. And again, if there's any contrast you want to make between working mum and full-time stay at home moms because of what you're seeing in the patterns. But tell me, what are the main problems and patterns in your working mum, clients?

**Torie:** I think it's just the inadequacy. When you're working it doubles or triples your feelings of inadequacy. So if you're a stay-at-home mom, you feel. Oh, I'm not doing enough, right? I could be better. My, I could keep my house cleaner. I could expose my kids to more. I should be more involved in their community. Everyone else is doing swim team. I should do swim team. You can still fall into this not good enough trap, but when you have a job, a career, then it just compounds it because you're like, I'm not good at at home, I'm not spending enough time with my kids at home. I should be more involved in the swim team, community, whatever.

But then you also have that at work. So you're like, I should be spending more time at work. I'm not doing enough at work. If I was a better employee, I would be ABC. And then we do the same thing with marriages and friendships and, so I think it just compounds it where if you're just doing, if you're just a stay home mom, you're like, yeah, I should be better. You don't have the thought. I should've spent more time with my kids when you're a full-time stale mom that very rarely pops into there. You're like, why am I so tired for being around my kids all the time? I shouldn't be, I should be energized because this is what I wanted. And I quit my job for this. And I should be grateful. That's more where people go.

**Jacqueline:** Yes. And when I did a survey of working moms early in, in developing, my ideas, that was what I noticed either they said I should be working harder at work, or I should be spending more time with my husband. I should be spending more time with my kids. And it just depended where they were at that moment in time in terms of, were they super full on in their career? So then the kids were missing or was it that they were spending more time with the kids and then the work was missing and, husbands were missing out.

**Torie:** And I think where, when we're choosing that, like which area needs our attention more, it's usually external, right? Like the boss is unhappy or my colleagues are resentful that I'm leaving early or the kids are acting up and they need more of my attention. Like we're looking outside of ourselves or my husband's pissed at me, whatever we're looking externally to know what needs our time and attention rather than looking internally. And that's what life coaching does was like, we help you tune inwards to find out what do you need, but stop listening to everybody else or you listen to the media, just everybody else says I should be blah, blah, blah.

And we've got to learn to tune all that out and focus inward and from a place of, as I call it instinctual intelligence, rather than fear is the, it's just the enemy that gets in our way. So much of the time, fear of not being good enough fear of someone being mad at us, fear of inadequacy, fear of missing out like so many different fears. And that's when we make decisions. When we make decisions from fear, you don't make good ones.

**Jacqueline:** Yes, I like that idea of the shift from the external to the internal cause almost it's not even on our list of thinking about what do I want to prioritize and oh, what do I need as well we're so serving other people's needs.

**Torie:** What happens is we don't even know. Cause we've just spent the last few years completely ignoring ourselves. So you don't even know what you want or what's right from your inner wisdom. Cause all you know is like what your kids want when your husband says you should be doing what your colleagues are doing. It's you can't even answer that question. Very rarely does a client come to me and I know what I want, and I want you to help me get it. They might say I want more meaning or to feel grateful and they know how they want to feel. They don't know how to achieve that.

**Jacqueline:** And then when you do burn out, like in my situation, so I burned out and left and then everyone's what do you want to do instead? What do you want? I was like, my God, I don't know. This is, this was such a bizarre question to me. And I felt so terrible that I didn't know. Cause I felt, oh my goodness, I've been wandering around the world, like an aimless idiot. And so then I beat myself up for not knowing what I wanted, but I was so shocked that I couldn't answer that question. And it did, it made me feel more inadequate because I was like, okay I've decided to leave my full-time job. And I can't answer that question.

**Torie:** And notice how they worded it. What do you want to do? Like Americans to be very focused on doing what are you going to do? A better question to ask is what is the feeling that you're hoping to find once you leave the job, right? Focus on the emotions.

**Jacqueline:** I like that. I like having that question instead. I'm going to try and use that. How do you want to feel?

**Torie:** Yeah, like what's the reason you're quitting. Okay. You're taking an action step for what end, right? What's the emotion you're hoping to achieve because when, because our emotions dictate our actions. When I'm tired. If you're whole, if you're in integrity, if I'm tired, it leads me to rest. So the motion creates the action. If I'm bored, I create entertainment for myself. If I'm overwhelmed, then the action I want to take is to clear my head, go for a walk. So you always want to be aware of what the emotion you're in, because it's going to create the action. Way more important than what are you going to do?

**Jacqueline:** So what are the best solutions that you are finding for working mums? Is it getting them to understand their emotions and start listening to their intuition? Or are there other, really concrete steps. I'd love for moms to come away today feeling like they had some concrete things they could do, because I think that's what I really appreciated about coaching. You gave me tools that I could use every day. So what can we present to working moms here so that they can start to feel, okay I know what to, I was going to say, I know what to do. I caught myself.

**Torie:** And that what you're getting at that so that working moms would know how to 'huh' it's that just even the way you took a deep breath, the way I call that is sitting in the driver's seat of your life and of your mind. That's what I see that working moms are so hungry for is like I want to feel like I'm in the driver's seat where every day I'm consciously choosing my day, my life, my time, that the way in which I'm spending my time is aligned with who I want be, aligned with my values, my integrity, that I'm not letting my to-do list, my children, my job, my house run me ragged.

So that's how I described that, where I can feel you're getting to, of okay, I'm the boss, this is my life. This is my day. What do I want to do? The best simplest tool, actually I have, if people want to go, they can download it. Go to life coaching for parents.com and it's 10 Q slash 10 Q and it's 10 daily questions. So you ask yourself five questions in the morning and five questions in the evening. Before you go to bed, you write them in your journal. And it's in the morning it's questions. What would I love to accomplish by the end of today? And so it gets you focused on a few things, love, accomplishment, and then a time period, a limited time period.

So sometimes it could be, what would I love to accomplish before noon today? Or in the next hour, you can always change the timeframe. And then how do I want to feel while I'm accomplishing it? So things like that, we start our day with power control, intention and focus. And then the end of the day questions are things like when today did I feel most present? I think when you end your day with a feeling of gratitude of what was I most proud of today, I think is one of the questions. So you could focus on the things you're doing well, focus on progress, as you're saying, right? Focus on, hey, I set a goal to accomplish that thing and look, I accomplished it because the thing, for those of us who were raised in the school system, where we get hooked on external validation, and then you become a mom and there's no progress report, no performance review, no report card.

**Jacqueline:** Actually I think there are some performance reviews. They're just negative. Why did you do that Mom?

**Torie:** It's just, it's so hard to keep motivated. And so we need to learn how to praise ourselves and recognize our accomplishments and focus on our progress and all the things that we did. And we're like, you know what, even though my kid hated that and complained, I still stand by that as a value, I am happy to uphold, because if you're looking at your kids' happiness to know whether you're doing a good job, so specifically that your adolescents, are going to be grumpy no matter what, so you need to like really make sure you're giving yourself credit for the things you're doing well.

So that's the first thing, I would say 10 questions, five in the morning, five in the evening, you can download mine and then tweak it if you want to focus on something else. But the second best thing Jacqueline, I think is it's just a mom-cation, right? Two nights in a hotel room by yourself. Now I get a lot of resistance to this, but let me tell you why. I think it's so valuable because this is for the moms who I have lost themselves when they ask themselves, what do I feel like doing? And they don't know the answer, what do I want to do? And they don't know, what do I want to feel? I don't know. What do I feel? I don't know. I can tell you how my kids feel, but I can't tell you what I'm feeling.

That is a state of burnout that requires in my opinion, solitude. So even if I have people come to me for life coaching, a lot of times I'm just, I'm helping them work up to that because a lot of them, they have a resistance to relaxation. They have a resistance to self-care they think a good mom wouldn't do that. Okay. But two nights in a hotel room, what this does is it gives you a full day in between where it is only you. Where you eat when you feel like eating, you do what you feel like doing, you rest when you feel like resting. It's fabulous. And it's exactly what the doctor ordered, because there's nobody else around for you to calibrate your intense feelings to right.

The hotel room is perfectly clean. None of it's your stuff. There's no cleaning up you have to do. And so there's something about, this is almost like just a blank slate where moms can, they're forced by their external environment to pay attention to themselves. And sometimes it can be uncomfortable. And so sometimes we have so we have to work up to that. I have had clients who are resistant to sitting down for five minutes. And just like sitting in the sunshine and just doing nothing for five minutes. And they're like, oh, my gosh people will die. That's like fear.

Fear is what controls this. So it's like fear that something bad will happen. If I put kick my heels up for five minutes, it's from that place, you're just not going to make good decisions. I was resistant to this as well. I had a huge resistance. I had to really work my way up with baby steps, like taking an hour out for a massage on Saturday. That was a baby step. When I finally did go to a hotel for one night, I was like, oh, I need to work. I need a quiet environment where I could work because somehow calling it a working vacation, made it more valid or helped me get over my belief a good mom doesn't just go on vacation without her children. There was a lot of baby steps I had to take to get up to that, but that is a really valuable concrete thing that a burned out mom can do.

**Jacqueline:** And I did it slightly differently than that, but that really became part of your message to me. And it took a while for sure. Cause I remember the first time I drove and took a walk on my own, for a couple of hours, my kids were with me on that walk. I was looking at everything in that little neighborhood that I walked around thinking, oh, Catherine or Callum would like this. And I, they were with me and oh, I must bring them back here. And then, oh, what else can I do with them, they were with me.

**Torie:** They weren't physically with you, but they were in your mind.

**Jacqueline:** They were in my mind and I noticed it. So that that definitely the first few times that happened to me and even in my trying to work through my relationships with my husband. I kept asking him to do more, but actually what we needed was for me to take a break. He didn't need to do more. He just needed to be able to spend time with the kids on his terms without me there. And so that's actually how we ended up doing it. I never got away and took a break, but he took the kids away. And the first few days I was really feeling terrible, that I wasn't with them. I wasn't on a vacation with them, but he took them to his family and I got a break and it did, it took a few days to actually breathe and be okay with it.

**Torie:** And that's it's like a detox, and you're going through withdrawals because get into, I don't, I guess I could call like a relationship addiction to our own children where it's I'm so hooked on them. Even when I'm not with them, I'm thinking about them. The way I think of it as your energy goes, where your attention goes. So if your attention is on your kids, 16 hours a day, guess where your energy has gone. That's why you feel so tired. I got so many moms calling me up, like, why am I so tired? I don't understand. They're like I was working full-time and then I quit and I'm a stay home mom and I'm like still exhausted. It's a mental attention. And so if your attention is not on you, that's why exercise is so helpful too.

One, you get to purge all the energy and adrenaline and everything, but you're also putting attention on yourself. It's hard to exercise and you could listen to a podcast I guess, and not get that. But if you are, let's say an exercise class, I haven't done for a year and a half, but exercise class, it's you're being aware of your body, of how heavy your breathing of your muscles. There's something that draws your attention inward. That gives you the double benefit of exercise.

**Jacqueline:** For sure. And it's definitely a good stress management solution. That's that was my area research exercise. So it's definitely really helpful.

**Torie:** But like Jacqueline can you say like your kids are in the room? How much of your attention is going on yourself while your kids are in that room?

**Jacqueline:** Right? Yes. It's definitely a struggle. Cause even if I have them occupied again, when I've been trying to work during COVID and then I'm working. So they might be on their screens in those times, that's in the back of my mind. And that's one of the things I definitely struggle with is this, when I'm working, I'm not paying attention to my kids and I'm not being the best mum. So I ended up having this work family conflict. Because even though work is so important to me and my kids are proud of my work, I still feel like I'm neglecting my kids when I'm working and I'm choosing work over them.

**Torie:** It sounds like you've got the same thing I had in my manual, which is a good mom, pays attention to her children, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If we're all in the same house, my attention should be on them, which I don't think is true. But I think a lot of us have that belief, like I'm neglecting my children, if they're on screens or something like that, or like we get these ideas, these beliefs in our heads, and then we think, that must be true, but then you could see other moms do not have that same stress. So that's how, you're like, oh, this is not just like a fact. This is coming from inside my head and do I like this belief? Do I want to keep this manual of mine that says, a good mom never ignores her children. I think good moms ignore their children all the time.

**Jacqueline:** And I think that is interesting too. Cause those beliefs, checking those beliefs and checking them off against other people. Cause I think that was really helpful in our group coaching calls is to see what other people had as their beliefs. So for example, your belief about the household cleanliness, I do not hold for some reason I never have. And so I at least okay, that's one thing that I don't get upset about or I have in my expectation list.

**Torie:** Right? Yeah. The group coaching is great for that because I got, I don't have that issue at all. That's oh, it works both ways. It's so nice to see.

**Jacqueline:** Yeah. So one of the things that I came across, so this was an example I wanted to chat with you about. So I interviewed Isabelle Roskam who developed the parental burnout index. So there was always this workplace burnout from like the 1970s and they developed an index around it. But she started to study parental burnout. And one of the things that's both related to workplace burnout and parental burnout is perfectionism. So again, I'm glad you've touched on that today because that's, what I started to realize was part of the problem, because, with workplace burnout, there's so much in the workplaces itself that's situational that is causing the problem. So in the workplace, if you then tell someone to do stress management and actually it's coming from the workload in, and the environment of the workplace. It's not a good solution. Whereas the parenting side of things is definitely looking at what are your stressors and what are the resources you have to be able to solve that issue.

Cause that's something that as a parent, you have more control of than maybe in the workplace. But again, she was saying, when you are perfectionist, you're likely to be suffering in the workplace and home. So that makes sense to me because you have these expectations that are high in all your domains of life and the same, like you mentioned for your marriage, for your friendships. So focusing just for now, then on the parental burnout side. Basically, you've got to write down a list of your stresses and a list of your resources. And you've got to say, okay, which resources can I leverage? Whether that's money, family and any type of thing that can help you do the thing you're trying to do. And then the stressors are the ones that you've got to try and reduce. So I was like, okay, I'm going to look at this. I'm going to see what I can do. With this crazy summer schedule I have with the kids at home, at camp with trying to start a podcast, trying to really focus on a mission around working moms. Also trying to bring in income from my grant writing work. So I just have all these things going on. Instead of some of being it's summer and yay family time relaxed. I'm like it's summertime stress. And this happens to me every summer. So I was like, okay, I want to solve this. I want to work out how I can approach summers differently.

But I looked at this like my whole schedule and in my calendar, and it was like, there was nothing I was willing to let go off. And then on the resource side, I feel so uncomfortable asking people for help. And it's not even just uncomfortable asking for help if I was thinking about, okay, I need somebody to help me. Okay. I've got to find them. I got to hire them. I got to manage them. So that side of the equation seemed harder for me to think about than the letting go of a stressor that I could let go of. I worked through and decided, one day that I just wasn't going to be able to get my podcast interviews in and get my daughter to camp. So I was like, okay, that day, I'm just not going to take her to camp. Again, I get it, first world problems here. But it was so hard for me to really get to that place. And then to be honest, it didn't work out because my daughter got sick. She hadn't been to camp for a couple of days. So I ended up taking her to camp that day and just like rushing between the two. And it did it all worked out. But I don't know. I just, I can imagine other people too struggle to make that equation work.

**Torie:** So let's, yeah, let's define perfectionism a little bit because so many people have a misconception around it thinking like, oh, that means like I do everything perfect. That my house is perfectly spotless or that, I, my boss thinks I'm amazing whatever. No perfectionism is black and white thinking. It's where if I don't do everything and it's the way we talk to ourselves. I either need to be great at everything, or I suck at it I'm a loser, right? Either I'm a good mom or a bad mom, either I'm a good employee or a bad employee. And we get stuck in this black and white thinking.

And so perfectionism, like I have to do everything right in order to be good. And so the way to, one of the ways to counteract that is to make it is to lower expectations and make the goal to be adequate. My goal today is to be an adequate mother, not a perfect mother. I'm not going to try to do everything right, but I'm going to be an adequate in everything I do. You can tell a perfectionist, if the idea of being an adequate mother gives you a sense of freedom and liberation. You're like oh, alI have to be is adequate.

So we're like other people are like, Hey, adequate, I don't want to be adequate, but yeah. So if someone gives you permission to do it and it feels liberating, take it. I think in that situation, what I would do is I would create what I call the drop the ball challenge, this week, or this summer, I am entering into drop the ball talent. Where can I drop the ball? Where can I just not do perfectly, not be hard on myself, like giving myself permission to make mistakes and celebrate them as though that's the goal? Where can I slack off?

And I had a coach that I interviewed on my podcast, Abigail Morgan. And she calls it strategic slacking where this week can I strategically slack off? And it's just so fun and freeing to play this little game with yourself. Give yourself permission to slack off too much screen time, not do what you say you're going to do. For me, I remember the first time I did this, my drop the ball challenge is I didn't RSVP to some event. There's always those people, you see the event and you can see those who said, yes, those who said no. And those who like, didn't respond, like I would never not respond. Like I feel people need to know. And I'm like, I'm going to be one of those people because I can't make a decision whether I want to go or not. I'm going to wait until the very last minute. And just not respond. And it was like, I could do that. That's an option. Then I started building on that. Whereas they'd send the sign up genius to sign up, to bring, juice boxes to the class party or whatever. And usually I'm like right out of the gates oh, I gotta sign up for something. Good. Something that I want to bring. And so I was like, I'm just not going to sign up and see what happens for anything. And then sure enough, everything would fill up. And there's nothing left for me to bring. And I was like, why didn't I discover this sooner?

So when you can give yourself permission to slack off. In any way area, you know what, we're just going to get, take out for dinner, cereal for dinner. I moved my deadline back two weeks. So when you become, you're a podcaster, or doing your own business, you are your own boss. And it's really hard because you're like, oh, I want to have it done by the end of the month, that's not going to happen. And it's finding this balance between you'd just want to be a good boss, right? You don't want to be super authoritative and rigid, but then you also don't want to like, give yourself so much leeway that you never get it done. And so trying to find that balance of okay, where can I slack off in this area? Where can I slack off here? And it's really freeing while still holding yourself accountable.

**Jacqueline:** And I think that, that idea, one of looking at your stresses or the things you do and just saying, okay, which am I not going to do? That just sounds so freeing to let go of something. But I think that was also because when I was preparing to interview us I was just thinking back, what did Tori do for me? And I was like, she gave me permission to let go of so many things you gave me permission to take breaks. So you gave me permission to do things for myself, but you gave me permission to let go of so many things.

**Torie:** And that's where workplaces could really be helpful is in setting a different corporate culture.

**Jacqueline:** Yeah. You work with so many different women from different jobs and things. What do you hear that workplaces are doing well? Or what do you wish workplaces would do differently?

**Torie:** During COVID every day I watched one episode of international house sitters just to give me this pretend like I was traveling, like in the morning and give me a little taste of adventure. And so I think I watched every episode on HGTV. And so many of them when they talk about why the couple was moving out of the U S they said they want a better work-life balance because in other countries, they have a culture where they admire you for taking vacations. It's a positive thing. I'm going home to spend time with my family. Oh, that's wonderful. I should be doing that too. It's like you get peer pressure the opposite direction, right? Where in the U S you feel pressure to put in more hours to sacrifice your family, your marriage, your self your health.

Just look at our medical system alone. Like it's here you go into medicine because you want, you appreciate health and healing and you have to sacrifice your own in order to get through the educational process to help others. It's not healthy. And it's out of integrity and out of alignment, in my opinion of who so many of us want to be and know in our heart of hearts is right for us. And so in America, there's just this culture of, oh, you're leaving early to go pick up your kids, yeah, it must be nice. Wish I could leave early. Oh, you're going to vacation. You're still doing a good job, but it's almost this, like we have to make it look like we're suffering in order to be accepted by our culture. Or we have to look like we're sweating, working hard. It's just, that's. Where I am very strong advocate of providing culture, whether it's in my little Facebook group or just through my, life coaching for parents program.

And my podcast is I want to shift the culture to say you just spent two nights in a hotel room by yourself. That's awesome. I want to do that too, because I've had so many clients who like finally come around to doing it, or, they're brave enough to do it, but they, it's like, they don't feel like they can tell anybody cause they're going to get judged. People judge them. They're going to look down on them, what you left your kids alone with your husbands or your parents or whatever, like it's. So to me, it's that illogical it's nonsensical. And so of course you need a break. You need to be able to pay attention to yourself and remember who you are, what you want.

And especially, it's just so easy to lose yourself through the course of raising kids, because they're very demanding, especially if you have a special needs kid and you've got to take that time a little way recalibrate because the person you were before you gave birth is not the person you are now. We change, we evolve and we've got to stay on top of that addictive relationship with our children. And remember what we want, like what you want is so key to your essence. And so to really pay attention to I want to lay in a hammock in the beach for a day, a week, whatever. But eventually if you did that in real life, you'd lay on a hammock for three straight days. Like eventually you'd be ready to get up and out of that. And I want to know what you want to do then, like that's what interests me. So you've got to get to the hammock, got to get to the hotel room to give yourself your primary needs.

Because once you do that, then you're connecting with your essence. Then you're like, that's when I feel like your best self emerges and you get your creative ideas again and you get inspired and you get energy and you're like, ah, I could actually make this happen. I could create this fabulous thing. And you know your kids benefit when they see mom fully alive, fully inspired, fully excited about her life. That's I think there's a great gift we can give. Yes, I agree. So companies celebrating vacations, giving people extra vacations days, people sharing their vacation plans. Minimize don't hide your vacation. So many corporate culture. It's like I'm going on vacation, but oh, I'll be working until the very end or I can still take calls while I'm on vacation. And it's we need to flip that and say, I'm going to be off the grid from these two weeks and I'm unavailable. And especially those in power, if those in power could start doing that more, being more open and honest and really self, giving themselves permission to do that, then it would reduce the fears of other people doing the same. Cause it's really hard if you're in the bottom of the totem pole to be the first one to that.

**Jacqueline:** So I love that our primary need is to rest so that we can realign and bring ourselves back. I think that's a really great place for us to focus.

**Torie:** Yeah. And it doesn't have to be through vacations, it can be through prayer and meditation, or daily practices. But I just, the clients that come to me can't do that when their kids are around. So even if it's getting in your car and driving around the block and sitting at a park and looking at trees. Like even if it's just that for an hour, a day, you're still rewiring that brain around I can leave my kids and they will survive. I'm still a good mom. If I take a break, like that's, we need evidence in order to rewire those beliefs. So we need to take actions and say look at that. I jus I just took an hour to myself, got a massage and the world did not collapse. The thing that happened, the children are still alive and well, and they don't hate it. Like it's all good. So we got to take those little baby steps in order to build up to the big stuff.

**Jacqueline:** Great. And you did, you gave me permission to sit in my car and watch Game of Thrones on my phone.

**Torie:** It's so funny to get the hear the creative ideas that people come up with, when they decide to prioritize themselves, like I loved that idea. Sit in my car and watch Game of Thrones on my phone. I had another client who gave her kids breakfast and then ordered door dash for herself and sat, put the kids in front of the TV and then FaceTimed her friend who lived in another state while she ate her door dash breakfast.

I just thought that was so clever. I just would never have thought of that on my own. She like, she put her kids in the gym daycare and then went laid out by the pool and didn't exercise. And she's like, whispering. Don't tell anybody, I just read my book and I didn't exercise, but those are the kinds of things that we want to start telling people we do because it gives other moms permission to do the same.

**Jacqueline:** Great. So that's such a, that's such a good way to end. We're going to do something naughty for ourselves, naughty and nice for ourselves. And we going to tell everyone about it.

**Torie:** Yes. Do it a couple times. And you got to build up the courage, and then start telling, cause the worst thing that happens is you tell someone and they're judgmental and so make sure you be careful who you tell. But even if you just go on a Facebook group and tell them I just did this thing, maybe that's not a good idea, cause they're going to judge you on Facebook, social media these days. But yeah. Be careful who you tell because you want to find someone that's supportive and encouraging and gives you permission to do more of it now.

**Jacqueline:** Tori, thank you so much for your time and this discussion. And I'll pull out some of the things you've talked about today and do a little behavior change plan for listeners to think about. Probably I'll do it around taking a break, how would you actually make sure that happened? Cause in terms of our behavior change science, we can say, okay, I'm going to take a break. But that doesn't mean it happens. We have to actually say, okay, when am I going to do it? How am I going to, who am I going to tell that I'm doing this break? That's going to make sure I take it.

**Torie:** And even if it's super small, right? Like I said, so people just, I start with five minutes sitting in the sun and that's a challenge.

**Jacqueline:** No that's important. Yeah. Make it small, make it achievable and build up from there.

**Torie:** Thank you, Jacqueline. It was great to talk to you. I'm excited for your podcast and so fun to catch up and hear how you're doing.

**Jacqueline:** Thank you so much.