

Summer: *Hi, I'm Summer.*

Mike: *And I'm Mike.*

Summer: *And we got married.*

Mike: *With children.*

Summer: *We're going on two years of marriage.*

Mike: *But we've been together for ten.*

Summer: *He brought two.*

Mike: *She brought two.*

Summer: *Together that's four kids.*

Mike: *That's way too many kids.*

Summer: *And we wanna share what works for us*

Mike: *And what doesn't.*

Summer: *For step-parents, co-parents, marriage, being your best self, managing work, family, friends, health. We're gonna talk about*

Mike: *Everything.*

Summer: *You ready, babe?*

Mike: *Always.*

Summer: *Hey guys. We're back with episode number four of the Everything Always podcast.*

Mike: *What's up? What's up?*

Summer: *Today we're gonna be talking about kind of a heavy topic but we actually had a lot of people bring this up and ask us to address this so that's why it become episode number four. It's definitely a little bit intense. I hope you get a lot out of it so before we go into that we're like let's talk about something a little bit light and funny.*

Mike: *Oh no. What's the episode about?*

Summer: *Well, okay so today, yeah that's a good idea. Well we're talking about bad mouthing your ex-husband or wife in front of the children. Bad mouthing the other parent in front of the children.*

Mike: *Yeah, so basically today's episode is gonna be a guide how to trash talk with kids.*

Summer: *No, not at all.*

Mike: *Just kidding.*

Summer: *Here's how to say your meanest, no. Before we go into that I wanted to say that I'm super proud of my husband because totally off topic-*

Mike: *Oh man.*

Summer: *He's been doing this workout thing. It started actually months ago, I feel like when you did a 30 day challenge.*

Mike: *Well it was only like actually a month and a half ago. We were in Cabo and I literally was like okay I am so fat right now. I have to do something about this. I'm not fitting in my frickin' swimsuit so I'm gonna make the 30 day workout challenge and for 30 days I almost worked out every day but I failed. I only got 27 workouts in 30 days.*

Summer: *That's not a fail.*

Mike: *Which I you know, but hey you know it is or it isn't. Either you do or you don't so I did it. It's been really fun actually. A group of our friends have all joined up in this*

Facebook group and we're calling it "The Sweaty 15" and it ends on, what is it? December. I don't know when it ends. There's five more days to go. Anyway.

Summer: That's the main thing. There's five more days to go but it's actually been pretty cool. What he learned from the first one was about actually having to be accountable and committing to what he said because he made this public social media announcement where he's like I am making this announcement because now I have to do it.

Mike: Yeah, it's awesome and actually there's been a few times where I'm like I would totally not workout right now but I'm not gonna be the one that fails the challenge so at 9:00 at night I'm hopping on the Peloton and rocking it out.

Summer: No, that happened so we had-

Mike: That happened day before yesterday actually.

Summer: Yeah, we had our daughter's choir performance and he's like dangit I haven't gotten my workout in and I just wanna go home afterwards and chill, put pajamas on, watch a movie and he did the workout.

Mike: It was kinda like the devil on one shoulder was like, have a glass of wine and watch T.V. on the couch. The angel was like, no get your heart rate up to 170 on the Peloton.

Summer: Yeah, 'cause after all he started, after he did his 30 day he's the one that started the 15 day challenge and it was all the let's do this before-

Mike: Alright, this is boring for everybody. Let's talk about something way more fun.

Summer: Okay. Here's the thing. It might not be totally fun but I think you're gonna be intrigued because here's what I have learned in my career as a stepmom, mom, wife, all the things, blended family is that this stuff is happening all the time. It's when you get all heated up and you want, you're mad at your ex for whatever he did or she did that you don't approve of. You don't like the way they handled something and you bring it up in front of your kids and you start to paint them as the bad guy in front of the child.

Mike: It seems to me that it's selfishness, right? You make yourself feel better by making someone else look bad. You stroke your ego, right, by doing that but the byproduct is this super negatively affects your kids.

Summer: Absolutely. Let's talk about what this looks like. I actually wrote a long blog about this.

Mike: If you haven't read the blog you should read the blog because there's less talking about working out and 30 day challenges. It's more straight to the point.

Summer: It is more straight to the point and it's really what does that look like. Really what that looks like is sometimes it starts with the argument between the co-parents and then what happens is you're heated up and you get upset and you start to say something in front of your kids whether it's "Your dad is always late and probably because you're just not that important to him", or "Your mom doesn't wanna contribute to any of these activities that your doing. I'm having to pay for it all myself", and things that are just painting the other parent in a really bad light. That's what it looks like.

Mike: In some situations it might even be true but the thing is it's not the kids business and no matter how you spin it and how you try to convey that information it doesn't work

for them. It leads to them feeling like they're somehow connected to it. It makes them feel bad about the person that they love and respect. There's this thing built into you that you love, respect and have this desire believe in your parents and the other one's running them down. There's a medical, technical term for it and I think it's called deg-

Summer: Denigration.

Mike: Denigration.

Summer: Yeah. It's actually it is a big deal and I think, here's what I think is happening. It's an ego thing. It's gonna make me feel better to put this person down so that you can see me as the better parent, the one who cares more but that's really not how they're seeing it. What they're feeling is, okay so my other parent who I love so much, you're basically saying that I'm not important to them or is there something wrong with me and what they do is they start to internalize it and think that there is something wrong with them and so really what we wanna talk about today is how to react, how to respond to that if you are being talked about negatively in front of children. If you are the one that is maybe talking negatively in front of your children because you're like dangit these emotions and these feelings are just getting out of control and maybe I shouldn't have done it but I did it. How you can really control that and also just really understanding where the children are coming from and how important it is to please not do that. We're just going into all of that. I feel like there's so many things around this topic and people get really heated up about this.

Mike: It sometimes will take a clear decision in your mind that you're gonna put your kids first because it can be very easy. When you're upset, when you hate the other person, when there's these things going on you have this natural feeling where you just wanna run 'em down but you have to know in your mind in advance and think about it and make a mental choice that you're gonna choose your kids over yourself in those situations and make sure that as far as the kids know everything is jolly and dandy and that everything works because there is no middle ground here.

Summer: Exactly because what you feel for each other, your person that you are co-parenting with, it doesn't matter for the kids. They just need to know that you guys love them and wanna keep them safe and secure. What your opinion is of your ex-spouse is none of the business of the children. They don't need any of that. It should not be their circus at all. They have enough stuff going on growing up in a blended family or with divorced parents or if they're teenagers or with, I mean there's so much going on in their world to have to deal with that is just it's not kind for them.

Mike: Yeah.

Summer: What I wanted to start with because we did have people that wrote into us and we were like okay we have to talk about this is a couple of emails that we received so I thought that I would share them. I do have permission to share them and so-

Mike: Are you gonna keep the people's names anonymous?

Summer: They are totally anonymous but I did have permission to share them so you may know who you are if you're listening.

Mike: And thank you.

Summer: But yeah, these are anonymous.

Mike: *Why don't you read it 'cause it's pretty good and it's pretty quick.*

Summer: *I'm gonna read them, they're pretty quick. Here's one that we received.*

Summer: *"For most of my young years until I was about 17 you could ask me about my dad and I would probably say he wasn't that great. That he cared about work more than he cared about me and that he had too many rules when I stayed with him but something happened when I turned 17. I started to see him differently. I was maturing and I actually witnessed other friends who had fathers in the picture but weren't really around that much. They saw them maybe one weekend a month if that. I was seeing my dad every other week. Yeah, he had a lot of rules. Yes, he worked a lot but he was also a ton of fun and wanted to spend time with me. He actually taught me a lot that I was angry about growing up but now appreciate. I was very tight with my mother. She was always there when I needed her but she also told me a lot of terrible things about my dad. I knew she didn't like him. She made it very clear. She had lots of moments where she was angry or irritable and I knew it was because of him. Even though I started to see my dad differently and really got along with him, I didn't ask to have more time with him because I knew it would upset my mother. I was so worried about whether it would hurt her feelings if I acted like I had a good time with him so I mostly only told her when I was upset with him like when he didn't show up for a play I was in and in a weird way it brought her and I closer together. Sounds bad, I know.*

Summer: *I'm telling you this because I now have a child and I see my mother trying to turn even my child against his grandfather. Being a parent changed everything for me. My dad isn't doing well now. He's very sick and one of the things I regret most is that I didn't get to have this close relationship with him that I could've had because I felt guilty if I did. I also feel like I had something all along that I didn't really get to appreciate kind of like I got cheated. I want your audience to hear this because it's a big deal. People aren't perfect but I wish my mom had made it okay for me to love my dad."*

Summer: *I wanted to speak to that one because it was like whoa. I think that it's so easy, sometimes people do this just with friends in business or whatever. You feel so strongly, you want everybody to feel the way that you feel about someone and it's not really fair to do because between two people, the relationship that you and I have is our business. The relationship that you might have with a business partner, that's your business and it's gonna be different than what you and I have and it's not fair for me to try to influence that by telling somebody else what I think of you. I think it's the very same with your children. Especially with your children.*

Mike: *No, I like that little story there because it gives you a 10 to 15 year perspective of the way that things can come around and that comes back to that selfish thing again. If you're in a situation where you're like yeah I'm totally closer with my kids because their dad really is a super jerk or their mom is a freakin' terrible person and I'm gonna convince them of that. You may win in the short term but man you're gonna lose in the long term because that just never works.*

Summer: *No, it doesn't work and I think the thing is unless you're talking about something that is an actual abusive relationship you really have to respect that you two are different people and you're going to do things very differently and that is okay so*

there might be a set of rules at one house that another household doesn't have and sure it would be lovely if you all did things the same way. It might be easier on the kids but the reality is that that's not happening. Things are different. Dinner times might be different. Well we do dinner every day at 6:00. Well, we just have a loose schedule for dinner or kids have to have their rooms cleaned here. Well I don't really care if they have them cleaned. That's all fine. It is all fine but when you start to get nitpicky on things or you start to put down the other parent because they don't do the things the way that you do, they don't view-

Mike: And it's like making your opinion or your perspective the right thing and man you sure have to be a cocky person to think that your way is the right way 100% of the time when everybody does something different. I've heard a couple different sayings right. I think in general most parents want their kids to be healthy, happy, well adjusted and to live a great life, right. The saying that comes to mind and I hear it a lot with a few of the people that I do some business stuff with is there's lots of ways to get to Central Park. My way even though it seems like the right way to me might not be the way that someone else gets to Central Park. It doesn't mean that their way is wrong.

Summer: Absolutely. That's pretty much it. You also love differently and that's so true. One parent might actually show love by discipline. Maybe it's a little bit more of a tough love type of a thing and another parent might be extremely nurturing and just always, whatever I can do for you. Let me have warm baked cookies for you every time you come home from school. There's so many different things-

Mike: I wish you loved me like that. I like the warm baked cookie love.

Summer: Right, I know. The thing is and I dealt with this and I even put this in the blog is there's differences even as much as my kid's father and I will try to be on the same page and try to support in terms of rules and things that are happening, sometimes things are a little bit different. The way that he will respond to something is different the way that I will respond to something and neither way is right or wrong and something might be more important to me or more important to him in how he responds to it. I will tell the kids hey if they want to express their opinion on that then they absolutely should and I wanna be there to listen to it and hear what it is that they think but at the end of the day I like them to know hey, yeah sometimes we do things different but we're both doing the best that we believe because we both love you and the beauty of it is that in this whole life experience when you become an adult you get to choose what is right for you.
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Summer: You get to choose your route. The way that you're gonna get to Central Park and it might not be way, it might not be your dad's way or maybe it's a mix of both. Who knows what it's gonna be but at least nobody was trying to manipulate or trying to tell them this is the only way and I'm right he's wrong, she's right, I'm ... that type of a thing. I thought this letter was so important like you said because you're really looking into the future and what really pained me, the thing that really struck me and I'm hoping that listeners really hear this is what if that were you as a child? What if you got robbed or cheated as this person said of that relationship?

Summer: *Especially think of that moment where it's like wow, my parent's life is coming to a close. They're sick or for some people they've passed away and you look back and go holy crap I didn't get to have that and actually maybe my dad wasn't perfect. Maybe my mom wasn't perfect but I didn't get to have that awesome relationship because I was believing all of these things or I didn't get to decide for myself. I think the main thing too is let your kids decide the relationship that they want to have. It's not really fair for you to try to influence that because it's up to them to decide. Hey, you know what, I'll make my opinion on what I think of this instead of you telling me what my opinion should be.*

Mike: *Yeah. I can tell you that in this topic it's most likely that nobody is 100% perfect. You may have split up and said hey I've got the best intentions. I'm gonna perform this way. I'm gonna act this way but it's really easy especially when you're in a triggered state. You're upset, it's easy to do that. What I would really say is set an intention to stop doing it now. Let's talk about some of the little takeaway things in terms of this, right. How do you deal with it? You might be the person that gets super mad and is like, you know what your dad is or your mom is freakin' terrible because she's always forgetting you at school. Whatever the thing is right. Now's the chance. You have the ability. Literally today if it's something that you don't think about make it a conscious decision that you're just not gonna do it. The things that you might be saying might be true but be the bigger person and just keep it to yourself.*

Summer: *That is such a good point. It might be true. You know what your mom is always late, that might be true but again that is up to your child to come up with the opinion on that. There is no need for you to say, well she's always late 'cause she just doesn't care about you. She doesn't care about getting you here on time or picking you up on time or showing up to games or I saw your dad in a whole new suit the other day and obviously that's why he didn't give you money to go to the mall because he wanted to buy that suit instead. That's the whole thing is always, it seems like the theme of the badmouthing is trying to let the child know that they are not important in the eyes of the other parent and it's all to make yourself look better in the eyes of the child but what happens and what this kinda perspective shows me and we have another letter as well, is that once that child becomes an adult and they start to see things differently they start to see that it is an immature behavior and-*

Mike: *And they will learn to resent you for manipulating them to believe something that may or may not have been true but even if it was true you shouldn't have been doing it because it's the kind of thing that literally doesn't help them. It gives them brain damage.*

Summer: *What's interesting to me is that and I didn't know this until I read this somewhere, but it's actually in some courts, it's actually considered a form of child abuse. It makes so much sense when you think about it because you're either preventing a relationship from happening but really you're making the child feel bad and I think that's what's so overlooked so I know I'm probably saying it 100 times.*

Mike: *They internalize it as it's their fault.*

Summer: *They internalize it as their fault because they are a part of that human that you're badmouthing. That is their daddy, their mommy.*

Mike: You want an example?

Summer: Yeah.

Mike: Even as an adult. Think of someone right now in your mind that you super love, right. Then imagine someone else that you super love talking the worst people shit about that person, right, and you're not allowed to defend them. You're not allowed to speak up for them. All you can do is listen and internalize it and it's either gonna make you mad or really really sad.

Summer: Yeah. Oh my gosh, the kids were just saying. I think it was Chloe or Ashlyn or somebody had asked me in the kitchen, "What makes you the most sad and the most angry?", and I said, "It's when somebody says anything bad about someone I love whether it's you, my parents, my husband". I was saying that and it's true. It makes you get upset 'cause you do internalize it. You're like wait a minute those are my people.

Mike: As an adult you have the functional skills to go you know what I can rebut the things that you're saying. I can figure it out but as a kid they're like I don't know what to do. I'm supposed to love ... it's just a twisted thing.

Summer: Well and you look up to them too. You look up your parents. You do see their fault ... we all see as you get older, well at least this is, my experience was my parents were amazing, they knew everything in the world, they did everything right. Then you start to grow up and you go oh they have flaws which is kind of awesome. You go oh okay it's alright. We all have flaws. Nobody's perfect but you still have this mad love and respect for them so I even remember my parents even though they were never divorced. I just remember if there were little things that my dad would say something about my mom or if my mom said something about my dad or if I heard them saying it to somebody else I was just like hey, that's my dad.

Mike: Yeah, totally. That hurts. I think we basically addressed. If you're the person that's doing this stop being a frickin' bad person. Just stop it.

Summer: By the way, here's what's awesome is that I think I say things in such a different way. Mike is just like bam to the point. This is what I think. I appreciate-

Mike: I'm not trying to sit here going I've never done this. I've learned so much and luckily I think I picked up on it pretty quick that hey this is hurting my kids when I do this. I'm not gonna do this but I think we've addressed that piece. Let's shift to the other side.

Summer: Okay here's what I wanna talk about.

Mike: What if you're the parent that doesn't do it and has the other side that's doing it? What can you do?

Summer: How do you respond to it? Yeah.

Mike: How can you say hey listen for the good of my kids this has to stop in a lot of times in situations where you don't have a functional communication line? What are the things that the other side can do to help prevent it?

Summer: Hey guys. I just wanted to say thank you. Thank you for taking a chance on us and listening to our podcast. Our goal is for you to not only learn from us but to learn with us. We've taken a leap on being pretty open about our blended family and how we do life and everything. We wanna make sure we bring you all the things you wanna hear. Always. Please if you have specific questions like how do I get along with my ex or how

do I get along with his ex or how do I set some boundaries in place or why doesn't my stepson like me? Please, please email us with your questions. Email them to info@summerfelix.com because we wanna answer those questions and we aim to bring you the best guests and conversations to address your most burning issues about everything, always.

Summer: I'm such a big thing about questions which you may have noticed on the last episode. It's like asking yourself because I feel like when you can ask qualifying questions you can respond in a better way and so for me it's questions and of course we'll have this on a pdf for you.

Summer: Let's just say your child comes home and announces something negative about you that your ex-spouse has said. Something like, daddy says that you care about dating all of these new people more than you care about me. Something like that. How can you, here's a question first to ask. Before going in and going, oh really well your dad, let me tell you a story about your dad and trying to get back.

Mike: Or that's not true he's ... before defending yourself. Before lashing back in response and using your kid as the tennis ball back and forth so you can battle.

Summer: Press the stop button right away and take a deep breath before you even open your mouth or before you whip out your phone to send a nasty text message or whatever it is. Take a deep breath and remember a few things.

Summer: First is ask yourself, okay this is the information that I've just been given. Can I find something positive about this? Can I turn this into something positive meaning is this perhaps an opportunity to start a conversation with my child? Maybe this is something my child's been thinking about. Maybe my child is having issues with me dating a whole bunch of people and them having to meet new people. Maybe that is something. Perhaps you could say, oh well what is your opinion on that? Open it up so that they get to have their own opinion. Come from a place that is non-judgemental, not attacking the other parent because what you're doing is you're one, teaching a lesson and number two, what you're doing is making your child feel secure so they feel that okay no matter what my parent's not gonna lose control and try to say something bad about the other parent. They're gonna start to learn that no matter what my mom or dad is in control and they're in control of their emotions so I'm actually gonna trust them to go to them and talk about things.

Mike: It's not an easy thing to do. You need to gut swallow the offense or the stab that was just put on you and go-

Summer: Oh. When is that ever easy? Exactly.

Mike: I'm just gonna go ahead and let you stab me right now and then I'm gonna just swallow it inside and I'm gonna respond in a way, make the mental decision to do what's best for my child.

Summer: That person that wrote in and that's why, this is really why I chose that one is if you noticed the person felt guilty. The person felt guilty for wanting to say something about the dad like I wanna spend more time with my dad or whatever because of the worry that mom and that bond would not be there anymore because they've bonded now over dislike of the dad. What I think is so much healthier is when you don't bring any of

that in your child then has this like well I can talk to you about all of the things. I can talk to you about when I miss dad. I can talk to you about when I'm angry with dad. I can talk about when I'm angry with you and all that and you've basically shown that you will not be judgemental, you will not spiral out of control so I feel safe with you and ultimately that's what we want with our kids. We want to be the person that they come to and talk to about all the things even the things that are going to be uncomfortable but that's what we're there for. That's what we wanna be there. Find something, is there something positive that you can turn that into something positive rather than something ugly.

Summer: *The next thing is even if you have done that you might still have that like I need to say something to my ex right now because I'm really upset that they said something. One thing to ask is what your about to say, is it going to help your child? Now there's two ways this can go because and you can interject at any time but there's two ways this can go. You could reach out and if you truly believe that it will be constructive that I can say, hey little Mary just came at me with this comment or just told me that you had said this to her and I'm concerned about it. I really wanna make sure that we're not saying negative things about each other and if you feel that the response will be, yeah you know what, I'm sorry about that, not gonna let it happen again, let me have a talk with her. If you feel like you're gonna get a mature response then it actually is gonna help the child because now you've said-*

Mike: *The response could be well I'm only telling the truth and if you don't like it then stop doing it, right. That's the combative thing. You're not gonna get anywhere with that.*

Summer: *If you know that you're gonna get something that's gonna open up Pandora's box and basically start an argument, it's not gonna help the child, it's not gonna help you, it's not gonna help the situation so really ask does what you wanna say, is it going to help? If you don't know, if it's the first time it's happening and you feel like hey I might get, maybe I can be constructive here-*

Mike: *If you put the kids first I feel like it would be more like I feel like for the best scenario for our child or children could we try to work with this set of rules, this game plan of how, regardless of how we feel let's put the kids first. If that doesn't work man-*

Summer: *Well if it doesn't work then I think you know in the future that maybe you can't. Here's the thing, oftentimes in these situations you are not going to share the same perspective. If you have the type of relationship where you're like you know what I think maybe I can share this and he or she will be mature enough to at least listen to it and at least be respectful back then great but if not don't even open the box and just deal with it one on one with your child because that you can control. That interaction between you and your child you can control. The other stuff that happens or is being said, you can't control unfortunately so you can just relish in the time that you have with your child and be as mature as you can and I promise even if it seems like you're having to swallow it and just take it, in the future as they get older we all mature. We all start to see things differently. They will start to see that and it will be worth it that you were mature.*

Mike: *You at a minimum can control 50%.*

Summer: *Yeah.*

Mike: Your one side, you can control 100% of that half. The other thing is you can try to make it up with love 'cause whatever that, whatever that negative thing is-

Summer: In cookies.

Mike: Yeah, maybe cookies. Cookies, that's my type of love. Anyway.

Summer: Yeah and the other thing. The third thing that I think it really piggybacks on the last one is the way that you respond to your child. The way that you if you are going to respond to your ex in the situation or reach out is ask yourself, is it more important for you to be right than it is for your child to be happy? These are hard things that you have to go through but even if you just ask that question I feel like the other things will fall into place. If that incident happens and you're just told something negative that your ex-spouse said about you, you can literally go okay the way that I respond right now is it because I just wanna be right and because I wanna look better and because I need to defend myself-

Mike: Justify.

Summer: And justify and make all of those things-

Mike: Or.

Summer: Or is it more important that I respond in a way that's going to make my child feel happy and secure. Always remember what their experience is 'cause they are kids. I think-

Mike: Well, you have another letter.

Summer: I do have another letter. I was just gonna say I think it's ... I can-

Mike: Is it long or short?

Summer: It's pretty short. It was another letter that came in. Let me find it here. Hold on I had it right-

Mike: Speaking of letters while Summer's trying to pull it up here on her computer. We've been getting a lot of people asking questions. A lot of people going hey could you do a topic about this?

Summer: There's a lot of topics we added that we were like, yeah.

Mike: We're like yeah that's actually a great idea. We love hearing that so private message us, email, smoke signals, whichever.

Summer: Yeah. You can email at info@summerfelix.com. The blog where we talk a little bit more about some of these topics is at summerfelix.com. You can DM us, direct message us through Instagram. You can message on Facebook. That's all ... on Instagram you can go to [@summerfelixmolder](https://www.instagram.com/summerfelixmolder) and you can DM me there. I'm already getting some great stuff which I really love because there's some things that I'm like, wow yeah that's right. That's something that happens and sometimes they're things that we have not actually dealt with ourselves, Mike and I, but we do have some great experts lined up. That is coming. We're gonna keep talking about some of these issues on upcoming episodes. We have a really great one with our daughters. There's all kinds of good stuff but there's so much to talk about.

Mike: We're gonna have the guy one, the bro one.

Summer: There's gonna be the bro one. Dudes dating girls with kids.

Mike: How do ... not girls with kids. How to date with kids.

Summer: *How to date with kids, when you have kids but also there's-*

Mike: *I mean I guess it could be-*

Summer: *They have kids and they're dating people with kids like us. It's basically what our situation was.*

Mike: *We're gonna have a few fun guests on for that one yeah. Anyway-*

Summer: *Alright here's another anonymous story. It's so funny because I think some people are like yeah you can totally use my name and then when it comes down to it they're like no, which is totally fine. We respect that. This is personal private stuff.*

Mike: *What's the point of putting people's names in there?*

Summer: *We don't need to.*

Mike: *It doesn't matter.*

Summer: *We don't need to. Anyways here's-*

Mike: *Unless we find out you're a terrible person then we're gonna announce you at the end of the show. We're not gonna do that. Like Santa Claus' list.*

Summer: *Santa Claus, you're on the naughty list. Alright. Here's another one that we got.*

Summer: *"I saw my dad every other weekend growing up. My parents divorced when I was about seven years old. My dad remarried within two years to a great woman. She is my stepmother. She never tried to be my mom and respected that I had a mother. She was always kind to me and stayed out of my business. I could tell she made my dad really happy. My dad never said anything about my mother. Never a bad word but when I was with my mom she always had something to say. She either criticized him or his wife. I sort of thought that maybe he wasn't that great of a guy based on what my mom would say. She was angry about a lot of things. My mom never really dated or got married again so it was me and my two brothers with her for the most part. It wasn't until I got married and had two children of my own that I had this epiphany. I actually got angry. I saw my dad so differently than how my mom wanted me to see him. Long story short I don't see my mom as much anymore. My kids have a closer relationship with their grandpa and my stepmom than they do with my mom. I was so close with my mom growing up and now I'm closer to my dad. I'm just happy I realized this now before it was too late."*

Summer: *That makes me sad. I love hearing this. It makes me sad that she. I can say that, sorry it's a she. Hopefully that's okay. Was close with her mom and then wasn't and I would wish in this situation for this person that this is expressed and that you can still have a close relationship with your mom. I understand the anger and I guess that's the thing is that it goes back and forth and the sad thing is I wish that it didn't have to go through periods of not close with mom, close with mom-*

Mike: *What a waste of time. What a waste of opportunity and like this like the other story like you're going through to read it. It's more about the fact that be careful what you do because how would you feel later if you're like wait a second I have a terrible relationship with my grown kids now because they got smart enough to know that I was dishing out a bunch of stuff about the other person and again it might've been true what you were saying but if you do it regardless of whether it's true or not it will come back to haunt you.*

Summer: Yeah. It's true. Again it is the child's opinion to make.

Mike: Keep your business to yourself.

Summer: Yeah. I wouldn't want, I would think of that and be like I would tell somebody right away. Don't interfere with my relationship with, that's my mom don't interfere or that's my dad. That's for us to have not you. Nobody gets to decide what your relationship gets to be.

Mike: But as a little kid-

Summer: But as a kid you get this-

Mike: They don't have the ability to be able to stand that ground.

Summer: They don't, that's right.

Mike: All they do is take it and internalize it and it creates pain.

Summer: Yup.

Mike: Okay.

Summer: Well, I think we've covered a lot here. There's more in the blog. I think this is something that could come up more because just like with other, even just with the last, I think only the two episodes we got more questions based on those episodes so we are gonna start, I will tell you this. We are gonna start doing some lives on social media because I think that might be one of the best ways to address a lot of these questions that may have come after an episode and we can piggyback on some topics that we've already discussed but we love it and keep coming with the comments and all that kinda stuff. It really opens your eyes as to how big this whole blended family world is, divorce, step-parenting, step-kids, all of that. It's endless the stuff that you can talk about.

Summer: Thank you guys so much for sticking with us and listening-

Mike: And tuning in.

Summer: And tuning in and we'll all-

Mike: Until the next episode of the Everything, Always podcast.

Summer: Yeah and come hang out with us on social. We wanna chat with you.

Alright guys.

Mike: Bye.

Summer: Bye.

Mike: Hey guys. Thanks so much for listening to our podcast. You know what they say if you can't find what you're looking for then you need to create it so that's what we did.

Summer: Yup, I scoured the internet and looked for the tribe that spoke to me and I just couldn't find the community that was raw, vulnerable and really wanting to make a change to the millions of families like ours so I decided to create it. It took about one conversation for my husband to say I'm in and here we are.

Mike: But it takes listeners like you to keep it alive.

Summer: So please if you like this write a review, take a screenshot, share it on your social media. Tell people. It means the world to us.

Mike: Remember to email us. We would love to hear from you.

Summer: And please share this with someone you love.

Mike: And be bold enough to share it with someone that you don't.

