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Summer: Naja, I'm so, so, so stinking excited that I get to talk to you today and that our audience gets to hear this conversation because I've been following you for a long time and I absolutely love everything that you put out

Naja: Oh, thank you, Summer. You're so sweet. Thank you, and I love your platform as well.

Summer: Thank you. Well, you probably know this, and I'm going to let our audience hear how you started your journey, but it is not easy. So-

Naja: Tell me, tell me how it started. Please do.

Summer: Oh my gosh. When I first found you and I was reading some of the things and the blogs, all the topics that you have out there, I was like, "Yeah." Like I know exactly what you're talking about, and every time we put out an episode that touches on these topics, the people that write in, or friends that are in situations that are texting or emailing, like, "Oh my gosh, finally. Somebody's talking about this. I've actually been struggling with this for two years. I feel so bad saying anything," or, "I don't want to talk negatively about our relationship or family or being a stepmom."

Summer: So it's just so important to have these conversations, and for people like you, who make it okay, and you've just done tremendous work with your clients. You're a family life coach, you're an author, you have a docu-series coming out, podcasts, like you do it all.

Naja: Man, I know. Totally kidding. I sleep a lot.

Summer: So can you share with us how you became a stepmom, bonus mom, and how you turned this into a platform and why it became so important to you?

Naja: I became a stepmother because a man that I had fallen in love with had recently had a previous family to be devastated by divorce, and I call a divorce, "The death of a family." So I met this awesome guy who was still grieving the family unit that had come apart, was kind of still in grief, I met him in the midst of that. Lucky me.

Summer: Yeah.

Naja: So needless to say, when you're coming up on somebody, or you're meeting them, and they're still in a grief process, and not necessarily him grieving the marriage or the end of that relationship, but just grieving his expectation of life as he knew it, and going from being an everyday parent, to what, every other weekend according to court documents, and so that was tough, and then I was starting to feel the brunt of the grief from the other household, and a lot of women, especially women that are married to guys that

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are, you're the second wife, or he has a previous relationship and there's children. You know what I'm talking about, girl.

Summer: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

Naja: You know that you're going to feel some of that grief, and it started to come my way. I could only swerve so much, because when dirt and mud are starting to be slung at me directly, we got a problem.

Summer: Right.

Naja: And I'm not a fighter, I'm not a high, I don't like confrontation. I don't do all that stuff, I'm an artist by nature. So the thing that I know to do is just to begin creating. And it was a situation where I felt like I was a 100% under attack. I'm like, "Naja, you met this great guy, you're in love, but is this the cost? Are you exchanging your peace of mind for anxiety and high conflict and someone saying, bitch, I'm going to kill you?" That was actually happening. Like-

Summer: Yeah, those are real thoughts that you have, that you go, "I love this person so much, but is this going to be worth it for the rest of my life?"

Naja: Is this going to be my life? And I could not reconcile that that was supposed to be my life, and I remember just talking to God one night. I was like, "Listen, hey, big fellow up there. You sent me this great guy, you seemed to have answered my prayers when you sent this great guy here, but I didn't ask for all this extra stuff. So what do you want me to do with this extra?"

Naja: As I'm always led to do in times of turmoil or conflict in my life, I started to create, and I built an online community called Blended and Black, and I started just voicing my issues, and I started asking people's opinions and telling what I would do to handle it, and my husband would always say, "Oh my God, you're like Gandhi, because anybody else would have cracked." I don't curse back, I don't yell back. I try to understand a person.

Summer: Right.

Naja: Because of my own life and situation, I now know the true meaning of what narcissism is, or I know how to communicate with a person that has been diagnosed with borderline personality disorder. I understand that when someone says, "You're ugly, you're fat, you're a failure, you're not smart," they're really projecting how they felt about themselves on to me, and I know how to swerve from all that crap now, but

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initially, I didn't, and so now I teach people how to do that, how to be un-bothered as hell, because I ain't really bothered.

Summer: That is so empowering once you learn that, and I know, I've been in the same place, where it's like you really, you start to believe those things, and when you can finally get to that point, and you probably know this because you see other people going through it, and you so desperately want them to feel how you feel, where it's like it actually, it doesn't penetrate, because you realize. You have that epiphany moment where you're like, "That actually has nothing to do with me, whatever you're saying."

Naja: A lot of it is unhealed trauma from childhood.

Summer: Yeah.

Naja: They're really projecting some crap that their grandma told them that they would never be on to you. So it goes really deep, and once you're able to develop a level of compassion, I know this sounds crazy, like, "You want me to be compassionate for a person that's harming me?" Yeah, I do. Feel sorry for them, feel sorry for their asses from a distance, but still show compassion.

Summer: That's so hard to do. I know so many women, and I know you know too, I know you work with them, on both sides, whether it's stepmom side or biological mom side, that hold on to so much bitterness that it's like, no matter how hard they might try, it's like one day they'll try to be a little bit nice, and then, all of a sudden, it's like they can't take it anymore. It comes out.

Naja: Yeah, it do.

Summer: How do you work with them? What are the steps to get them to have a different perspective? And really, because all that is, is causing them more stress. It's really the most harmful to themselves by having all of that bitterness and all those ugly feelings.

Naja: Yeah. So if there's a woman that absolutely, because I've had it happen a lot. She'll say, "Naja, I really want to get along with my child's father. I want to get along with my kids' new stepmom. I don't want to hate these people. In fact, I don't hate them. I want my kids to see me happy." If a woman can say that to me, which in most cases, she will not be able to say that to me, she won't be able to say it like that. The woman that comes to me will not really be able to say it in that manner, but what she would be able to communicate is at least she's willing to talk and she knows that there should be a change should happen somewhere.

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Naja: So first thing I would do is just to ask her, her why's. I say, "Girl, why you so damn mad? Why are you upset?" And she's going to give me all of these reasons. She's going to allow herself to stay in the land of victim-hood, because it's really easy to live there. That's why most people are walking around feeling victimized all day, because they see themselves, "I'm a victim of this and this has happened to me and my circumstance has been this."

Naja: So first, I'm going to talk to her and meet her where she is. If she wants to have a pity party all day, I'm going to go sit with her for about an hour or whatever, and we're going to talk about her why's, why so and so made me feel this way, and then I'm going to challenge her to answer me and say, "Well, what are you willing to do to come of it, to reclaim that? So and so may never apologize to you. Your ex is happier now with his wife. Your children actually like their stepmother. You were not good partners together."

Naja: And I would say, "You also ..." Some people would say, "Well, he's an awful person." Well, you knew him then. You don't know him now. This woman might have a better version of him, and you have to be okay with that, and you have to give a better version of yourself to whomever your next partner will be, because surely, they're not going to want who you are right now. That cat over there didn't. He did not.

Summer: Such good points.

Naja: And that's when they get pissed off and get mad, and that's fine, because I want them to get upset. I want them to see that it's okay to feel anger, because then, I can teach them how to process that anger. I can teach them how to compartmentalize it, and feelings are just what they are. Sometimes, it's just gas. You're not really that angry, you just got indigestion, girl. You need to belch because you're drinking Sprite. I teach them to find mechanisms by which to heal themselves and to calm themselves down, and so it's a process dealing with clients that are coming in with any sort of trauma, whether it's self induced or it comes from an outside source.

Summer: Gosh, it's so hard for people to own it too.

Naja: Yeah.

Summer: That's like the biggest thing, and I've even seen it go with, I've seen it happen with fathers, mothers, like in these situations with both, where they have moments where they will apologize and go, "Gosh, I'm really sorry for having done X, Y, and Z or of having been nasty last week, or about getting upset with you about being late," things like that.

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Naja: Yes.

Summer: But, then, it comes back right away.

Naja: You know why? Because that's a mark of instability to me.

Summer: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Yeah.

Naja: Because as adults, well, not as adults. In childhood, we're kind of taught accountability, and, "Hey, I'm going to be accountable for my actions. I was a jerk to you last week and I'm going to acknowledge that I did that," but that's something that gets twisted, y'all. Just because this person looks like an adult, that doesn't mean that they are. This is just like a 35 year old grown kid. Okay?

Summer: Yeah.

Naja: This is a big kid talking to you from a trauma induced place. If you find that the person is constantly going back on their apology, or they just apologized for kicking you in the shin two days ago and they're doing it again, this person is not well, and so you need to treat them as such. You now know that those apologies are going to come like clockwork. They're still going to go back to the same behaviors, but now, you've got to be smart and protect yourself, and you've got to set up some personal boundaries, or else, you're going to keep falling for the okey doke.

Summer: What are the tools that you give clients when you are dealing with high conflict? So if you're a couple dealing with an ex-wife or a husband that's very unstable, there's lots of rollercoasters going on, it's smooth, then rough, I mean, how do you manage that?

Naja: I say let it be a rollercoaster for her ass, not you. Don't jump on the ride. You can volunteer to jump on the ride with them, and they're going to take you through those ups and downs, and they're going to vomit on you. You're going to get all of this crap, but number one, don't play the game. So many of us, I believe, are addicted. Even those of us that are healthy or consider ourselves emotionally balanced and healthy, we're kind of addicted to drama because it's what we expect now.

Summer: Yeah.

Naja: So if you have an expectation that there's this person that activates your anxiety, whenever they come around, you're expecting it, so you know there's going to be drama, and you play right into it. Well, you have to first remind yourself that, "Hey, this is not okay. Hey, Naja, hey, Summer, this is not okay."

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Naja: A person speaking to me or going back on their apology or calling me names or cursing at me or berating me in my parenting, that is not okay. I will not allow. Me, personally, Naja, the woman's voice y'all are listening to right now, if a person has something bad to say about me, and they have the gall to say it to me, they're probably only ever going to get one chance to do that.

Naja: Now, I am a very forgiving person, so I will allow it, but at this point, I'm mentally strong enough to say, "Okay, you're not a person who I can, I can't even let your words go in my ears, because I cannot afford to have this garbage that you're spewing out of your mouth come anywhere near my ears, because it might plant a seed, and I can't risk that."

Summer: Right.

Naja: So, like you mentioned earlier, Summer, boundaries, first and foremost, I tell anybody, set yourself up some boundaries, but you have to stick with them. That's number one through five of the list, because you can say you're setting boundaries, but then, you, yourself, have to realize, and admit to yourself, "Okay, I did allow them to penetrate me today. I did do that." If I step on your shoe 20 times, are you going to just let me? And I apologize each time, at what point are you going to be like, "You know what? Let me move my foot."

Summer: Exactly.

Naja: "What am I? I'm stupid. Let me stop being stupid here, let me move." So you've got to move because they are not. They're going to keep doing it because your foot's right there for them.

Summer: Right. You know you're still worked up about when you feel that need to respond to it.

Naja: Yeah.

Summer: And one big rule we have is just we don't interact. If it's not something that's productive, that has to do with kids and helping them with a schedule, health, school, whatever it is, if it's something that's an emotional whatever, text, attack, whatever it is, or something that really doesn't have anything to do with them, even though it's disguised as if it is, but really, it's something else, it's just like don't engage. Do not engage, and it's hard. In the beginning years, it was hard.

Naja: So hard. Oh, God, Summer, because you just want to say, "You bitch."

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Summer: You do.

Naja: Right?

Summer: I mean, when somebody, it's just like ...

Naja: Oh my God.

Summer: ... a natural thing. It's just like, "Who the ..." But, I think, like you said, when you said let the rollercoaster be on that side, on his or her side of whatever they had, let them enjoy that ride. Somebody gave me such a great analogy years ago, and it was, if this person's beating their chest, like if you think of like Tarzan or whatever, I'm beating my chest, I'm having a big hissy fit or whatever, be the lamppost. Let them go crazy, let them be the crazy birds flying all around you, but you just be the lamppost. And I was like, "Oh my gosh, that is brilliant," and it's so true.

Naja: And let me tell y'all something about, and I used to not to like to use the word crazy, because I get like, "Oh my God, Naja, you're smarter than that," but my own podcast is called, I Know I'm Crazy.

Summer: I love that.

Naja: I don't want to say, "him or her," because I don't want to use offensive pronouns, so I'm just going to call that person, that high conflict in your life, "Your crazy." So when your crazy comes and they send you a text message and they tell you how awful your mother is, how stupid you were, how glad they're not with you anymore, you're a terrible parent, your wife is ugly, fat, this person sends you this message, y'all, let me tell you, because I deal with your crazy's also. They'll call me and they'll laugh about these things that they've said to you, and now, they've moved on with their day, but then you, you're pissed off for the next 24 hours.

Summer: Yeah.

Naja: So, essentially, what they've done is, they've been able to transfer that energy that resides in them permanently, because they have an endless supply, you don't, they've been able to transfer that over to you, and I have the privilege of coaching, counseling, all this, all my crazy's, so I get to see the other side of it. I don't want you to get so wound up, because I can promise you, they are not. Once they've hit the send button, the devil has done it's work, and now, it's the way to you to ruin your day.

Summer: Yeah.

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Naja: So please consider that. Please, please consider that. They ain't thinking about you once they send that. I swear they're not.

Summer: Right. And you do not have to receive it.

Naja: Nope.

Summer: That's basically it. They might have sent it, but you do not have to welcome it or receive it.

Naja: Spam them, baby. Block button, hey, my block button is strong. Spam block, or just, if you're emotionally very, very, very strong, you can look at it and keep going. I would suggest that you find some positive things to do. I remember, in the beginning, like when drama was tough with us and before I had learned about, "Naja, just block the number," I remember I'd get so worked up. I'd be like, "Okay, Naja, you have to develop some good habits because you can't just be pissed off." So I would do 200 crunches every time I got pissed off, or when something came my way. Y'all, I had abs in six months, no lie.

Summer: Yeah. Yeah, I bet.

Naja: I had a washboard stomach. I wish I still would do those things, but yeah, develop some sort of good habit. I also teach my clients that turn the ugly into something productive. Don't respond back, don't go and eat a cheeseburger.

Summer: Right.

Naja: Don't do anything like that. Do something that helps your wellbeing.

Summer: Yeah, yeah. Turn it into a positive.

Summer: Hey, guys, I just want 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 anything. We want to make sure we bring you all the things you want to hear, always.

Summer: So, 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 want to answer those questions, and we aim to

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bring you the best guests and conversations to address your most burning issues about everything, always.

Summer: So I wanted to talk about, in your situation, I know you've blogged about this and talked about this, and that is the whole biological mom and stepmom and that relationship, and I think you have a very similar standpoint as I do, which I'm like there's got to be boundaries. I think you can be friendly, but being friends comes with a lot of responsibility.

Naja: Responsibility.

Summer: That can be a little bit maybe not so healthy for your marriage and for that family. So I would love for you to go more into that, and also, in those relationships, because I think most of, and you know this too, most of a lot of drama will happen amongst the women, unfortunately, but that's what's happening, and I've seen a bio mom and stepmom who've had a great relationship from the very, very beginning, made the choice, and it has been. It's worked for them, but what about those who are like, "Well, gosh, it was okay, and then it was really bad." I mean, how can you get to a healthy place after maybe things have gone terribly wrong?

Naja: A friendship between a biological mother and a stepmother. I have seen some women become straight up BFFs, so while I know it's not an impossibility, I don't want you guys out there to go into your co-mothering relationship with the expectation of this is how things can be. This is how things have to be in order for me to look successful or be successful in my new role, because it's just not. It's, literally, not.

Naja: The reason that you are a mother is because you got pregnant by a guy. The reason that you're a stepmother is because you've married a man, or a woman, or anybody, you've married a person that has children. So the common denominator in this is the man or the person in the middle. Your focus is on your relationship with that person in the middle. So if you're a biological mother, and you're like, "Oh, he has new woman. Oh my God, this is awesome," well, if your relationship with him is imbalanced, and it's just not going to be cool with that other woman because her loyalties lie with her man, with him, or with your children's father.

Naja: And if you're as stepmother, and you're looking to develop some sort of friendship with this woman, the first thing you do is establish a relationship based on boundaries and respect. That's my two favorite words. I've said that in my own situation, I say it to all my clients. Is it possible for us to have a relationship based on boundaries and respect? And from the stepmother's perspective, what does that mean?

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- Naja: Well, friendship is a word that does insight responsibility. We are friends. That means, if I tell you I'm going to call you back, then you kind of expect that. You have expectations of me, and you really don't want that when you're dealing with these types of situations, because, number one, your own household is your number one priority. That's the thing that you care the most about, your marriage, everything that happens in it, these children that are in the household, and so the lines can kind of get blurred when you say, "Oh my God, we're friends." First, learn how this woman communicates
- Summer: Yeah.
- Naja: Biological mother, learn how she communicates. Does she take constructive criticism well? Maybe she will snap on you if you say, "Hey, well, the kids really prefer to have their hair done this way," or, "They like this type of bubble bath." So you really have to take it real easy and learn about her first, learn about her quips and her family and her background, and keep it surface.
- Naja: Coming into it brand new, no, don't come in thinking you're gonna be friends. More than likely, you're not going to be. However, if you are, just think about it. It took years for she, maybe years, I don't know, for her and her man to, her and your man, wow, I'm sorry, to develop the relationship that they have today. So you're not going to come in overnight and be welcomed into the fold and you're not going to have that same type of relationship.
- Summer: If things have, say they didn't start out well, or there's been a lot of high conflict with a man and the ex-wife and the new wife and the ex-wife, is there hope for that relationship?
- Naja: There's absolutely hope. There's hope when everybody involved, all the parties involved, are able to acknowledge their part in the break down in communication, and they're able to own it. They can apologize and they can kind of accept their roles, and they also have to acknowledge how they've made other people feel. There has to be some serious apologies, and then, the way that you know something has changed is, we were talking earlier, is consistency. We can't have this one big hug it out session, and then, next weekend, we're fighting in the Whole Foods parking lot again. Like we can't do that.
- Summer: Right.
- Naja: But I do think redemption, in any case, is possible, except there's like a list that I made in my book and I don't have it committed to memory, but if there's been cases of violence or stalking, or you know this person has a mental illness and they are not, they're

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refusing to go and get treatment, in cases like that, I would just command that you keep a very safe distance. I don't even want to call it a friendly distance, but I would suggest you go no contact, but in cases just short of, "Oh my God, we were killing each other and we're attacking one another," then yeah, I do think that healing can happen.

Summer: What kind of things have you seen with the stepchildren in relationships? I know that there's one thing that I would like to address more, because this is also something that's come in a lot, actually a lot, and I feel like you're the right person to talk to. A lot of women are really having hard moments with their stepchildren, and usually, this is around like, a lot of them are, it's like between the ages of 10 and 13, 14, somewhere around there, and it's girls and boys, and stepmoms are like, "Oh my gosh, it's been so hard," whether it's trying to connect, or they actually have a falling out. I mean, it's like, it's to the point where it starts to interfere with the relationship and with the marriage.

Naja: Oh, that's terrible.

Summer: Yeah.

Naja: The kids, the children, because we are stepparents, we are now co-parents, because there's a kid involved.

Summer: Yeah.

Naja: Some of sort of way, we were not able to walk away from this relationship scot free because you are now tied to one another, and children are so caught up in the middle of our adult drama. They really are. There's a lot of parents that try to protect their children from the fallout of divorce, but I mean, my God, kids are very smart. They see that you don't live together anymore. They see that you have a new partner, they see you don't talk the same, they see that you're showing up for parent teacher conferences at different times. The thing that can be done to really nip that in the bud, number one is. I also have a lot of kid clients, and kids tell me everything. My God, you guys would be surprised what your children will come and tell me that they would never say to you, because they feel like they have to protect you.

Summer: Yeah.

Naja: So, number one, don't put your kid in a position to where they feel like that they have to be your protector. Don't do that, because now, they don't feel stable, and one of the things that kids do, like for example, if they hear their parents fighting, they're like "Oh my God, I don't want my mom and dad to divorce." They don't really care about you divorcing, because you're going to be unhappy, and you're going to have to find new

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love, and you're going to be devastated financially. They are like, "Oh my God, I am not stable. I'm not in a stable situation anymore. What's going to happen to me?"

Summer: Yeah.

Naja: Children are inherently very selfish, and they want to make sure that they will be taken care of, and they're going to want to stay with the parent that's going to take the best care of them, and the one that they have the most sympathy for. So if you're the parent that's showing them that you need to be cared for, because they're seeing you cry, they've watched you become a basket case, you're complaining about their other parent to them, they're going to feel like you're the one that's not okay, "So let me kind of take care of her, but then, I know she's going to take of me too."

Naja: So, the second thing is, offer your kids a lot of reassurance, even as a stepparent. If you know these children are products of a breakup or divorce, either way, their biological parents live under two separate roofs, so you can offer reassurance as well. I would just encourage any adult in a kid's life to say, "You're okay. Everything's going to be okay. I'm going to do everything in my power, and I have a lot of power, to make sure that you are always taken care of, that you are well, and if you need anything, I need you to tell me. Don't be embarrassed, don't be ashamed. It's my job to take care of you. Okay?"

Naja: And you have to really drill this in these children's heads that, "I am the person that's going to take care of you." As a stepparent, you have that right. Of course, biological parents have the right to do so. So I would say reassure these kids, and you got some that are still going to test you, because they don't understand, and talking, I believe in talking talk, talk, talk, talk, talk. I talk all day. I love talking to kids because they might pretend that they're not listening, but they're absorbing everything that you're saying.

Summer: Yes. In our family dynamic, and our kids were so young, and so it's kind of like they've known each other, but even still, I mean, I have had these deep conversations where they're like, "Hey, I want to tell you something that I haven't told my mom or dad." Or, "I want to tell you something, but can you talk to dad first before?" It's like they have kind of that trust, and I'm like, "Oh, yeah, of course." And they still, I remember, even though the divorce happened for both of our kids when they were so young, they're still affected by it, because they're still ... There might be still conflict going on, even as they're getting older, and they see that and experience that.

Summer: There's other families that we know of that it's like, it's just happened, and their kids are right at that age. I feel like, once they're older, it's especially hard. I mean, it's hard, no matter what, but especially, as they're getting older, having to, all of sudden, go like,

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"Well, I've had all of these years with these two people, and now, all of a sudden, you're in my life. Wait, what?"

Naja: Who are you?

Summer: Who are you?

Naja: Why are you here?

Summer: Yeah, and I think you're right. I think that they hold back some things because they're afraid of making a parent feel bad, and so they'll tell somebody else. I think if I had come into their life much later, they might not have been so open or it would have taken a lot of years, but I think to hear that kids are saying that to you and the things that they say, it's because it's a safe place to say it, because they do worry. They want to have their parents back. They don't want either parent to feel bad. It's the whole reason why talking negatively about another parent in front of your child makes them feel bad, makes them so uncomfortable, and feel insecure.

Naja: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Absolutely. You call that a loyalty bind.

Summer: Yeah.

Naja: Kids feel these extreme loyalty binds to parents, and an unhealthy parent forms an unhealthy enmeshment with these kids, and meshing simply means that, as parents, when we do it, "I can't see where my child ends and where I begin," and that's some really unhealthy crap.

Summer: It's so unhealthy.

Naja: Because your kid is an individual. As much as we like to think it, they don't really belong to us. They don't. They belong to God, they belong to the world. You are the vessel that's meant to rear them, but they don't belong to us, and parenting is one of the most egotistical jobs out there. It really is, but a healthy parent realizes, early on, what their role is in this person's life, but an unhealthy parent, they form a very unhealthy attachment, and they keep the kid from being able to form positive relationships in the future.

Naja: If you block your parent, if you block your child from forming a positive relationship with their stepparent, an adult that takes care of them that they actually like, imagine how you're facilitating unhealthy thought processes. Like, "Hey, I can't like this person," so they're going to be confused.

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Summer: Oh, absolutely.

Naja: So don't do that.

Summer: Yeah. And I think by allowing them to make their own decisions on who they like and who they want to have relationships with without manipulating them into what makes you more comfortable or allows you stay co-dependent, by not doing that and letting them be their own human being, just lets them be so much more capable, like you said, as adults, because there are books on this. You were talking about enmeshment and what's happened in the future with unhealthy relationships because of that.

Naja: It's terrible.

Summer: It's really, it's actually pretty fascinating when you look at all that, and when you look at that stuff, if you are doing things like that, you start to go, "Oh my gosh, I don't want that for my child especially." Our jobs are to guide them into being capable adults, not to keep them at our side connected to us all the time, so that we feel better.

Naja: Absolutely.

Summer: I get very heated up.

Naja: It's a passionate topic because, if you're a healthy person, and you're grounded properly and you were reared properly, when you see improper parenting, it pisses you off.

Summer: Yeah.

Naja: And when it's very close to you, it really pisses you off, because now, it affects your life.

Summer: Right.

Naja: And your day to day.

Summer: Oh my gosh, I think I could like talk to you forever because you have like all of the topics, like I just-

Naja: Girl, I got them all, girl.

Summer: You got all of it.

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Naja: Oh God.

Summer: I want to know where, though, because we don't have forever, and I wish we did. Tell me where we can find, I know we can go to BlendedAndBlack.com, and that's where we can find your podcasts. We can find so many great blogs and videos and all the topics. I mean, everything to do with co-parenting, divorce, finances, stepmom, step-parenting, like all of it is there. I absolutely love it. It's been such an amazing community for me, so thank you.

Naja: Thank you for being in the Blended and Black community, Summer. I love and appreciate your support, and yeah, you guys can find me everywhere at Blended And Black, and my name is Naja Hall. So you can either look up Blended and Black, and just because it's called Blended and Black doesn't mean everybody's not welcome, because everybody is welcome. All you've got to do is, kind of, sort of be in a blended family, and you are welcome into the fam. That's what I call our community. I call the community our fam, and my book can be found at GirlBye.info, and the podcast, I Know I'm Crazy, is out in April.

Summer: Oh, so excited. This is going to be so awesome.

Naja: Yeah, me too.

Summer: Follow her on Instagram too because she's like so gorgeous. You have all these gorgeous pictures. So many great like posts and-

Naja: Oh, thank you, Summer.

Summer: Yes. You are. You're stunning inside and out.

Naja: And you, yourself, honey, I mean come on now.

Summer: Oh, thank you.

Naja: I've seen your pictures. Y'all, Summer is fine.

Summer: Thank you. Oh, I'm so excited that I got to speak with you. We are going to have, as listeners, you know, we will have a downloadable cheat sheet. We'll also have all of this information on the cheat sheet, so that you can find everything about Naja on there, her books, her podcasts, docu-series, her community, everything, it's all there, and thank you so, so, so, so much for being with me today. So fun.

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Naja: Thank you, my sister. I appreciate you. Thank you so much.

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: Yep, 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 wanted 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.